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The cover of Guns & Ammo's subscriber edition features the elegant and sophisticated 828U 12-gauge shotgun from Benelli. It's the company's first venture into the over/under market.

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READER BLOWBACK

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WELCOME BACK

Congratulations on the feature "Best of 2014." It's very helpful to have your choices of the best summarized for readers. When I can afford it, I will buy an HK VP9, your best-pistol choice.

Paul Welz
Chico, California

.40, .45 OR 9mm

Unfortunately, it sometimes takes me awhile to read through past issues of G&A. While reading the October 2014 edition, a comment in the "Reader Blowback" section caught my attention. It seems that a certain Mr. R. Wylie feels that all pistol calibers should start with "4." Mr. Wiley goes on to say that the reason many manufacturers have 15-round clips in their 9mm pistols is because it takes that many rounds to bring down an intruder, but with .40 or .45 caliber it only takes one or two. I assume that Mr. Wylie knows this because it took him 15 rounds to bring down an intruder. I'm thinking that it took 15 rounds because he probably missed with the first 14. If 9mm is good enough for NATO on its battlefields, I'm pretty sure it's all right for personal defense as well.

Charles Goding
St. Petersburg, Florida

SAVAGE ATTACK

I congratulate you on having the courage to publish a reader's letter that was a personal attack on an individual. Mr. Savage was, shall we say, savage in his attack on Patrick Sweeney. He resorted to name-calling and character assassination while contributing nothing to any discourse pertaining to guns. Mr. Sweeney displayed a great amount of class in his response.

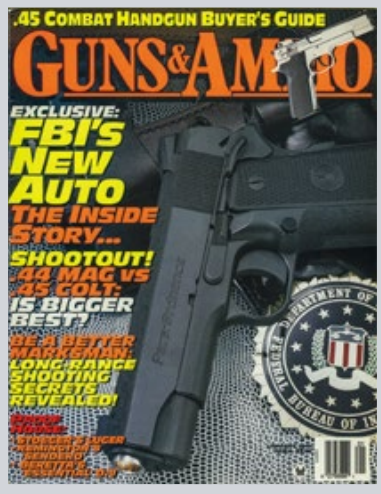
Brian Smith, Mt. Holly Springs, Pennsylvania

In the Jan. 2015 issue, Sweeney took a shot to the pride from an angry reader. I have to say that I appreciate Sweeney's work and have used his findings to pass on or buy several handguns and ammunition, but I never consider the thought of their service while reading an article. I don't see how the two are connected. Keep up the good work, the whole team at G&A.

Mike Foster
Kentucky

JANUARY 1995

Kevin Steele, former G&A editor and now publisher of Petersen's Hunting, tracked the inside story of how the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) went from carrying 9mm Hi-Powers to .45-caliber 1911s. Although the frames and slides wore the markings of Para-Ordnance, Les Baer Custom won the contract in September 1994. The FBI required a capacity of 12 or 13 rounds, so Les Baer used Para-Ordnance double-column-capable frames and slides to build a tackdriver. It was the only submission to pass the FBI's test requiring 2-inch groups at 25 yards. The evaluation reflected an average of three 10-shot groups fired with the gun mounted in a Ransom Rest, shooting standard-issue 230-grain Federal Hydra-Shoks.





CIVILIAN LIGHTS?

I read SGM Lamb's article twice in the January 2015 issue. It was well written, simple and informative. It actually allowed me to visualize scenarios in my home I had not even considered, so I did a day and a night walk-through after reading it, making mental notes as I went. I appreciate the suggestions in the article and your publication. Keep doing what you're doing.

Bobby Clark
Bowie, Maryland

CHRONO ASSASSIN

I, too, have killed a shooting chrongraph. To prevent it from happening again, I utilize a laser to help me aim at a target, then hold a black piece of paper over the chronograph and center it with the red dot. Keep up the good work, Sweeney. I love my handguns and hope to be as good a shot as you one day.

John Buttner
email

I had to laugh at the "Chrono Assassin" article

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in the January issue. I also bought a Chrony chronograph. About my third time at the range, I shot it with my .357 Magnum. I bought another of the same model, thinking I could use the old one for spare parts if I shot the new one. This plan fell apart when I shot the new one in exactly the same place. It was my best group. I got an idea from someone on the Web that has helped me. When the metal rods holding the sky screen are shot, that can break the plastic bits that hold them in place at their base. Replacing them with bamboo shish-kabob skewers cut to the same length allows the bullet to shatter the wood without stressing the plastic base. They are rigid, light and cheap.

Bill Ramirez
Chandler, Arizona

OOPS, OUR BAD

In the February 2015 issue of Guns & Ammo magazine on page 59, we incorrectly listed the MSRP of POF-USA's ReVolt in 5.56 as $1,600 and the .308 as $2,030. The 5.56 ReVolt is actually priced at $2,030 and the .308 model is $2,680. Also, we omitted that a complete 5.56 ReVolt upper with capture pin and 10-round magazine is $1,310.
— Eds

¿HABLA ESPAÑOL?

I was disappointed to see an article about Aguila ammo written in Spanish [on the G&A webpage]. Any language other than English is not appropriate for a United States-oriented website. Your U.S. readers should not have to search the Internet, wasting time, to find programs in order to read your articles in English. If you want to pander to me, post an article on Sako rifles in Finnish. Do you have anyone on your staff who can write/understand Finnish? An individual with two languages is blessed. A nation with two languages is cursed. The Guns & Ammo staff is promoting the curse.

Mark Ollila
email

Great article in the Jan. issue on Aguila ammo. I have tried some .22LR Super Extra 36 grain in my Chiappa 1911-22, and it has performed as well as the CCI Mini-Mags in every way. The one thing you will notice with the Aguila that the author failed to mention is that the gunpowder used has a distinct smell to it. It must be the waterproofing Aguila uses in the ammo. Thanks for the article. I will look for the other calibers to test in my handguns.

Scott Schoenfelder
Millbrook, Alabama

MILEK & BODDINGTON

What a pleasant surprise it was when I came across Craig Boddington's memorial to Bob Milek in the October issue. I had the privilege of working for Remington for 40 years, with the last half as manager of the Custom Shop. In that capacity, I was fortunate enough to interact with both Bob and Craig on numerous occasions and became fond of them both, considering them friends.



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The nilgai hunt that Craig tells about is a vivid memory of mine, as I was teamed with Bob and Craig on the day described. I remember Bob shooting the bull with the .35 Remington, but it was not from a T/C Contender; it was from my prototype XP-100 Custom. Craig and I were spotting for Bob at the shot and both saw the bullseye hit at the base of the neck on the front of the chest. The bull was facing directly at us at about 50 yards. I also remember the look of disbelief on Bob's face as the nilgai sauntered off almost unaffected.

The three of us, plus the guide, searched for at least an hour trying to find some blood sign that we could follow, to no avail. We were really in the dumps about it. It was rare for Bob to shoot anything without harvesting it. We later learned that we were far from alone in that regard, as a number of other groups had similar experiences.

I can personally attest to what Craig said about Bob's influence on the XP-100 line. When I took over the Custom Shop in 1983, one of the challenges put to me by my boss at the time, John Linde, was to expand the offerings in the XP-100 beyond just the 7mmBR and the .221 Fireball.

TWITTER



@gunsandammomag
#OMG Everything does have a price ... @TheRealSigSauer

@MKsarge This is what my heaven will look like :)

@Jreno89501 The only thing that would make it better is a humidor stocked with @Ashtoncigar

@F_A_Hayek_Fan Sweet! I'd love to have a room like that in my house!



Over the next few years, I spent a lot of time picking Bob's mind as to what calibers we should be adding. The first that he suggested was the .35 Remington, so that was the one I started with. From there, we added the .223 Remington for Bob's beloved prairie dogs and just kept going until we had about a dozen different calibers available from the Custom Shop.

We were so successful that the production-grade XP-100 line was broadened as well. There were even wood stocks offered for them, similar to but not as refined as the ones from the Custom Shop.

As Craig eluded to, there are endless Bob Milek stories. I'm proud to have known him, as well as Craig.
Tim McCormack, Manager (Ret.), Remington Custom Shop

TRACKING POINT

You're probably getting a pile of letters regarding the "sportingness" of the TrackingPoint system written about in the January 2015 issue. Most of them are likely misunderstanding the nature of sport.

If I'm just harvesting meat or killing enemies, I'll happily use TrackingPoint (if someone else pays for it) because it makes my job easier. "Sport" is actually the seeking of challenge, not easiness, and it is highly individual and circumstantial. If you can hit a deer without a scope, scopes aren't sporting. If you need TrackingPoint to hit, then it's sporting. If we wish to be sporting rather than just bag our limit by any means available, we only have to ask whether a particular gadget or tactic keeps us in the "challenging but doable" range of difficulty where sport exists.
Darrell Scott
Moss Point, Mississippi

With the advent of [TrackingPoint] technology, hunting and firearms proficiency as we know them are heading toward a slow death. I can only assume that the next logical step is an Alaskan or African big-game hunt conducted from a recliner on a flat-screen TV utilizing a drone-mounted TrackingPoint rifle. No, thanks; I'll keep my lever-action Winchester and bask in the experience of having done it the old-fashioned way.
Joseph Ladow
Fort Pierce, Florida G&A



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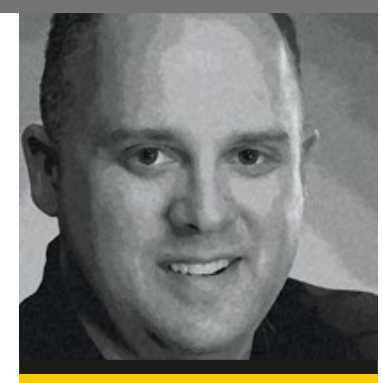


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ERIC R. POOLE

@BLACK5PROJECTS

TESTING & EVALUATIONS

GUNS & AMMO aims to bring its readership the first look at any new guns, ammo, optics and suppressors. Firearm makers need to keep their FFL records clean, so there is continuous pressure to return firearms and optics promptly after testing. The typical manufacturer loans Guns & Ammo its new product for about six to eight months. In most cases, we start receiving invoices the day the product arrives, and the letters that follow show increasing agitation until said product is returned. With plenty of competition to review new products, those who are most professional usually get first crack at breaking the next big story.

G&A strives to provide its more than 11 million total-reach readership with as much detailed information and photography as the loan period and resources allow, but no test we can perform is equivalent to your experience with a product after having lived with it for several years. You may encounter problems that we do not. Also, we are not one of the military's proving grounds where millions of dollars and several years are applied to evaluating a candidate in controlled experiments before it's adopted.

In a perfect world, we'd torture test every product to failure and fire every load through every firearm for performance data. That level of testing is impossible for any gun magazine or blogger. I've tested hundreds of firearms over my 12 years working on staff for the NRA's American Rifleman, various Harris Publications titles and now here. I can say that G&A's T&E procedures are pretty much the same. For example, hunting rifles are usually tested measuring the average of three shots from at least three different loads, which are fired from a benchrest or supported prone position at 100 yards. Tactical rifles take the average of five shots, also from 100.

Shotguns are tested on paper at 40 yards with at least three loads fired at a patterning circle noting the size and each shot's aiming point and its relationship to the center of the actual pattern. When testing target loads in a shotgun, every tiny pellet has to be counted faithfully.

Handguns used to be tested in a fixed Ransom Rest from a distance of 25 yards. When available, a Ransom Rest is still the preferred method for obtaining a handgun's mechanical accuracy potential. Unfortunately, many contributors cannot afford a Ransom or come up with the different grips for each model, so testing handguns with three loads from a benchrest position at 25 has become an acceptable alternative.

Testing personal defense handguns is the subject of much debate. People argue whether the firing distance should be 5, 7, 10 or 15 yards, and some even question whether accuracy is important at those ranges. Since every shooter's ability varies, we demand that our contributors test their handguns for accuracy potential on the bench.

Chronographing each load is a requirement of most gun publications, including this one. Though we publish the average muzzle velocity (MV), standard deviation (SD) and extreme spread (ES) of five shots fired across the clock, I'd like to take this moment to encourage you to purchase a chronograph and learn how your guns perform with different ammunition before relying on them.

With thousands of companies in this industry and only 12 G&A issues to present what's new, virtually every manufacturer in this industry is willing to share its secrets of tomorrow's products with us today. Innovations and products that bring value to G&A's readership will always get our attention. Once nondisclosures are signed and embargo dates are agreed to, it's my job to weigh the significance and value of a product in accordance with the magazine's production schedule.

I get hate mail from a few readers who threaten to cancel their subscriptions if we publish another favorable review. Really? The line "You've never met a gun you didn't like" has been repeated so often that I now consider it cliché.

Why publish a story about a product that failed our tests? An old adage declares "There's no such thing as bad publicity." Even with a bad review, that company would still benefit from having been written about. I'm not going to waste these pages or your time writing about a product that isn't worth your attention. G&A



The Ransom Master Series Rest is the benchmark for testing a handgun's mechanical accuracy potential. $414

PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

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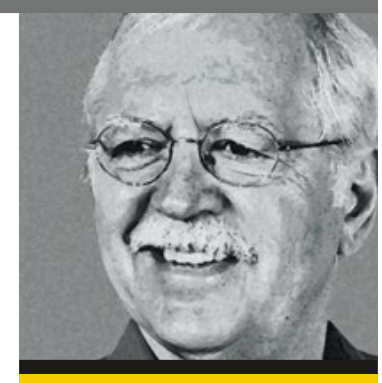
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COLT MODEL 1911A1 MILITARY, 80%: $2,200

VIETNAM .45s

Q: I have been reading your fine assessments of firearms since I can remember you writing for G&A. Your dedication and concise, detailed responses are the thrill of the magazine for me. Over the years, I have collected Colts — Diamondbacks, Pythons, Detective Specials, Govt. Models, Gold Cups back to post-World War II and pretty much every Smith & Wesson revolver back to the early '60s. You see so many ARVN troops and our men carrying .45s in films of Vietnam. Can you guess (and I am happy with a guess) how many were lost in the total conflict, how many are left in current inventory (unaltered) and what will eventually happen to them? The fact that they may be severely worn is not a concern. Also, I finally found an OD HBT cap like yours. Is yours a repro?

R.A.
email

A: *Thanks for your loyalty. I'm glad you've had something of an interest in my ramblings over the years. As far as your first question is concerned, while the 1911A1 .45 was the main U.S. issue handgun during the Vietnam War (some unaltered 1911s also made their way over there), I have no access to records concerning the number employed or how many might still be remaining. I really don't like to speculate on such things, especially when I have no frame of reference. Perhaps one of my readers who is better versed in Vietnam War lore may be of some help. The answer to your second question is easier. While I have some original World War II HBT caps in my collection, the ones I wear are repros. They are easier to get, cheaper than the real thing, and I don't feel too bad should something happen to one. I get mine from What Price Glory, 888-431-2351, onlinemilitaria.net.*

SCARCE RUGER TRAP MODEL

Q: I recently acquired a 12-gauge Ruger Trap Model single barrel in near-perfect condition in the original box. I would appreciate information on the history and total production number of this model. I understand that very few were made. The original choke tubes were not included with mine. I would also like to know whether Ruger Red Label choke tubes would interchange with it.

J.W.H.
Jarreau, Louisiana

A: *Yes, the Ruger Trap Model is a scarce bird. Only 300 were made from 2000 to 2003. They originally came with two choke tubes. Ken Jorgensen, director of media relations at Ruger, told me that if you contact Ruger Customer Service (603-865-2442), they should be able to fix you up with a proper set of choke tubes.*

ARISTOCRAT SHOTGUN

Q: I really enjoy reading your articles on firearms. For years, I've been trying to find information on my Aristocrat side-by-side 12 gauge, with no luck at all. The serial number is on the forearm, breech and barrels, 977XX. I took it to two gun shops; they have no idea about it. The gun has a patent date of April 20, 1915. It has a walnut stock and what looks like a brass receiver. It's hammerless and in about 90 percent condition. I'm hoping your expertise can help me.

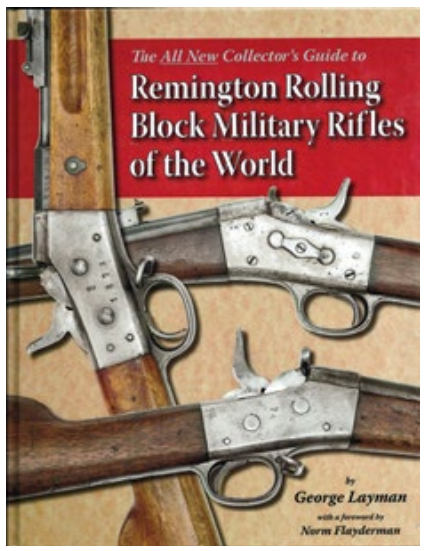
THE AUCTION BLOCK

A scarce, cased pair of Glassick & Co. derringers sold for $19,500 (including premiums), close to twice their high estimate, at the October 9, 2014, James D. Julia Inc. auction. These Tennessee-made pocket pistols are rarely seen cased, and their condition is exceptional for what are usually hard-used Southern pistols. With German silver appointments, they still retain a considerable amount of finish. The case is complete with accessories. For more information about this and future auctions, contact James D. Julia, 207-453-7125, jamesdjulia.com.



HAVE AN HEIRLOOM? Curious about a vintage firearm? Email Garry at **garry.james@imoutdoors.com**, or send a description with detailed photos to **Gun Room, Guns & Ammo, 2 News Plaza, 3rd Floor, Peoria, IL 61614**. Please include your name and state of residence.

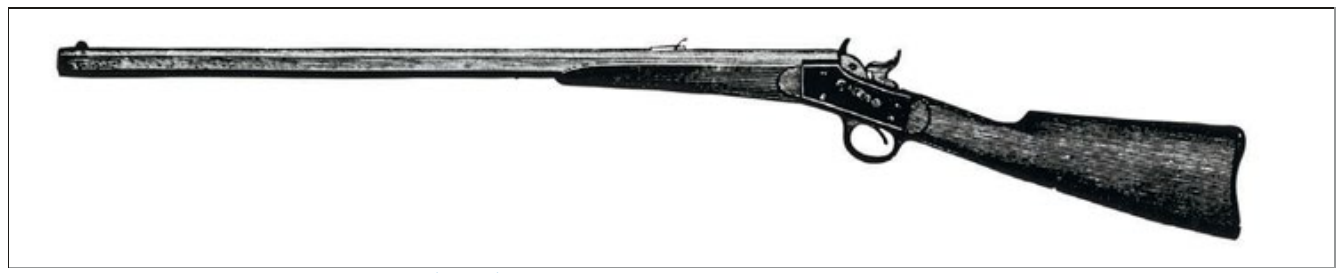
Due to the volume of requests each month, personal replies are not possible. The most interesting or unusual queries are answered in Guns & Ammo magazine.



RECOMMENDED READS

"The All New Collector's Guide to Remington Rolling Block Military Rifles of the World," by George Layman, Mobray Publishing, 2010. $39.95

The Remington Rolling Block, as well as being one of the most versatile and efficient single-shot designs ever, is important in that it probably saw use by more militaries the world over during the 19th century than any other rifle of its type. As martial Rolling Blocks were employed by armies on virtually every continent, the study and collecting of these single-shots can be a one-stop hobby. George Layman's well-written, finely researched and fine treatment of this fascinating arm is the best work of its type on the military RB and an excellent aid in understanding and identifying this sometimes elusive subject. Black-and-white illustrations are uniformly top-notch.



REMINGTON NO. 2 SPORTING RIFLE, 40% – 50%: $400 – $600

Good luck to you if you decide to take this challenge. Keep up the good work.
B.E.
email

A: *Thanks for the nice words. I've seen reference to the early "Aristocrat" shotgun from time to time, variously described as having been manufactured either by Crescent Arms or Stevens, but to my knowledge no one has been able to nail down the gun's provenance definitively. In any event, it falls in the "hardware store gun" genre, that is, it's a serviceable, inexpensive shotgun that would be manufactured by the maker featuring whatever name the retailer might wish. Generally speaking, these don't command much money. An average example in 90 percent shape would bring about $250 to $400, depending on features and quality. This shotgun shouldn't be confused with the Franchi Aristocrat, which came out decades later and was an entirely different animal.*

REMINGTON NO. 2

Q: I recently acquired a small Remington Rolling Block rifle at a private sale. Based on the information I received at purchase, this rifle functioned during its early years as a tool that saw frequent use but was not shot very much in the last 50 years. It's clear that the previous owners valued its purpose and utility because it has been very well cared for. All the metal is a uniform brown patina and exhibits no rust or corrosion. The two-piece stock has the expected dents and dings from normal use, but it appears to be original with the exception of a small (perhaps decorative) insert in the tip of the forearm. The metal buttplate is gracefully curved and wraps into the buttstock on top. All mechanical components are in working condition and also appear to be original. The bore shows its age but would probably be classified as semi-bright. The trigger is actually excellent, even by today's standards. It breaks sharply at slightly less than 2 pounds with no perceived drag or overtravel. The rifle has a 24-inch octagonal barrel with a slight taper from breech to muzzle. The barrel is stamped "Remington Arms Co Ilion N.Y." The front sight is dovetailed and drift adjustable, but it appears to be soldered in place. The rear leaf sight is adjustable for elevation. The bottom of the barrel is stamped "22" near the forward end of the forearm. The left side of the receiver sideplate is stamped "Patents May 3 1804 May 7 June 11 Nov 12 Dec 3 1872 Sept 8 1873." There are three assembly screws in the left sideplate, laid out in a triangular pattern. The top screw is smaller than the bottom two. There is also one additional screw in the center of what might be described as a pin lock "bow tie." An additional stamping of "23XXX" is found near the rear of the triggerguard. My layman's evaluation of the rifle's condition/grading would be as low as 50 percent and as high as 80 percent. Perhaps you can refine that assessment from the attached photos. I'm an old geezer myself, and I appreciate old things that still work and look good. Can you provide the history, model, specific caliber (.22 short/long?) and value of this rifle?
C.M.
Camdenton, Missouri

A: *From your excellent description and photos, I can see that you have a Remington No. 2 Sporting Rifle. This popular little single-shot rolling block was made from 1873 to 1910 in large numbers and many calibers, from .22 Rimfire to .48-40 Centerfire. A variety of special-order options were available, but yours sounds like it is pretty much stock. Without actually seeing your rifle, it's difficult to determine the exact caliber, though .22 RF is likely. You may have to take*



I am steel. I am rock. I am man.

I AM MY WILL

STEEL WILL
KNIVES

it to a gunsmith and have that checked out. Generally speaking, No. 2s in the larger centerfire calibers are the most valuable, with the .22s bringing the least amount of money. In the condition you describe, I'd value your piece at between $400 and $600.

COLT KING COBRA

Q: A friend gave me your email address and thought you may be able to get close to the accurate value of a pistol I have. It is right at 20 years old and is a Colt King Cobra .357 Magnum. It's blue with a 4-inch barrel. It has the original grips, some paperwork and the original receipt. It has had a trigger job and about 300 rounds fired from it. In my opinion, it is in top shape, no scratches, dings or dents. I do not have the blue box it came in, though. If you could give a price on this gun, I would sincerely appreciate it.
G.S.
email



COLT KING COBRA, 95% – 98%: $925 – $1,100

A: *They should all be this easy. According to the "Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Edition Blue Book of Gun Values" (bluebookinc.com), a 1990s-vintage 4- or 6-inch Colt King Cobra in 95 to 98 percent shape is worth between $925 and $1,100. Those with 2½-inch barrels are worth about $400 more in either condition.*

TOKYO BAY 1911

Q: I am writing this letter in regard to a Colt Model 1911 U.S. Army pistol. My father-in-law passed away and left his pistol to me. It is stamped "United States Property." The following patent dates are stamped on the side: April 20, 1897, Sept 9, 1902, December 19, 1905, February 14, 1911, and August 19, 1913. It has a horse stamped by the patent dates. The other side is stamped with "Colts PT.F.A. Mfg Co. Hartford, Ct. U.S.A." The serial number is 702XXX. It has one extra barrel, and it is in a show case with a picture that has "Tokyo Bay — Sept. 2, 1945" under it. The bluing is slightly worn, but I would say it is in at least 80 percent condition. Would you be able to tell



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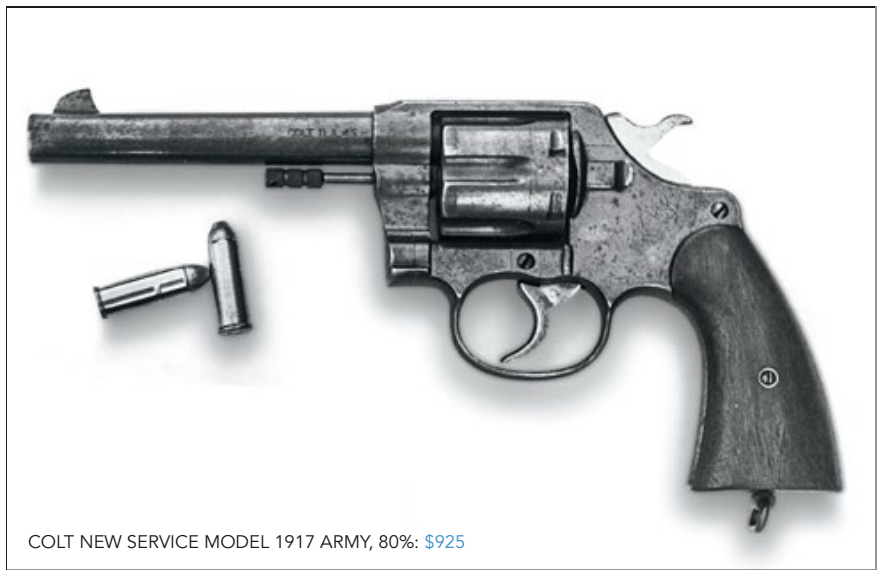
me anything about the gun and its value?
K.W.
email

A: *Intriguing artifact. The Japanese surrendered onboard the USS* Missouri *in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, so the assumption would be that your father-in-law might have been there and witnessed the event. That's something you'll have to check out yourself through family records, etc. What I can tell you is that the pistol, which is a 1911 Government model, was manufactured in 1924. An 80 percent Colt from that period, sans added provenance, according to the "Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Edition Blue Book of Gun Values," is worth $2,000. If you can place it and its owner at the surrender, that would probably bump up the figure.*

STEVENS LITTLE SCOUT

Q: I have a rifle that I would like to find out the value of. It is marked on the barrel "Steven Arms Company Chicopee Falls, Mass USA Little Scout 22 Long Rifle," then "sVg" in a circle and "Pat. July 2, 1907." The barrel is 14½ inches.
G.P.
Twin Lakes, Wisconsin

A: *The Stevens No. 14½ Little Scout rolling-block .22LR rifle was a popular, inexpensive "boy's rifle" manufactured from 1909 to 1936. This was one of a line of similar arms offered by Stevens. Other barrel lengths were also available.*



COLT NEW SERVICE MODEL 1917 ARMY, 80%: $925

1917 COLT PARTS

Q: I have a vintage Colt 1917 .45 revolver. I lost the small, knurled, threaded, screw-on end piece for the cartridge ejector rod. Any ideas as to where I could find a replacement? I really enjoy your G&A articles.
B.M.
email

A: *I know your plight. I lost the ejector-rod head on one of my 1917 Colts and got a replacement from Numrich Gun Parts Corporation (914-679-4867, gunpartscorp.com). I would recommend fixing on the new one with Loctite.* G&A



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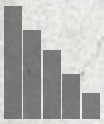
M110 FCP HS PRECISION, 338 LAPUA



M111 LONG RANGE HUNTER, 338 LAPUA



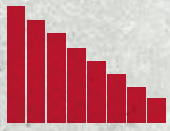
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"I've worked multiple jobs for 35 years to support ***my hunting habit*** *… "*



CRAIG BODDINGTON
/OFFICIALCRAIGBODDINGTONPAGE

HAVE RIFLE, WILL TRAVEL

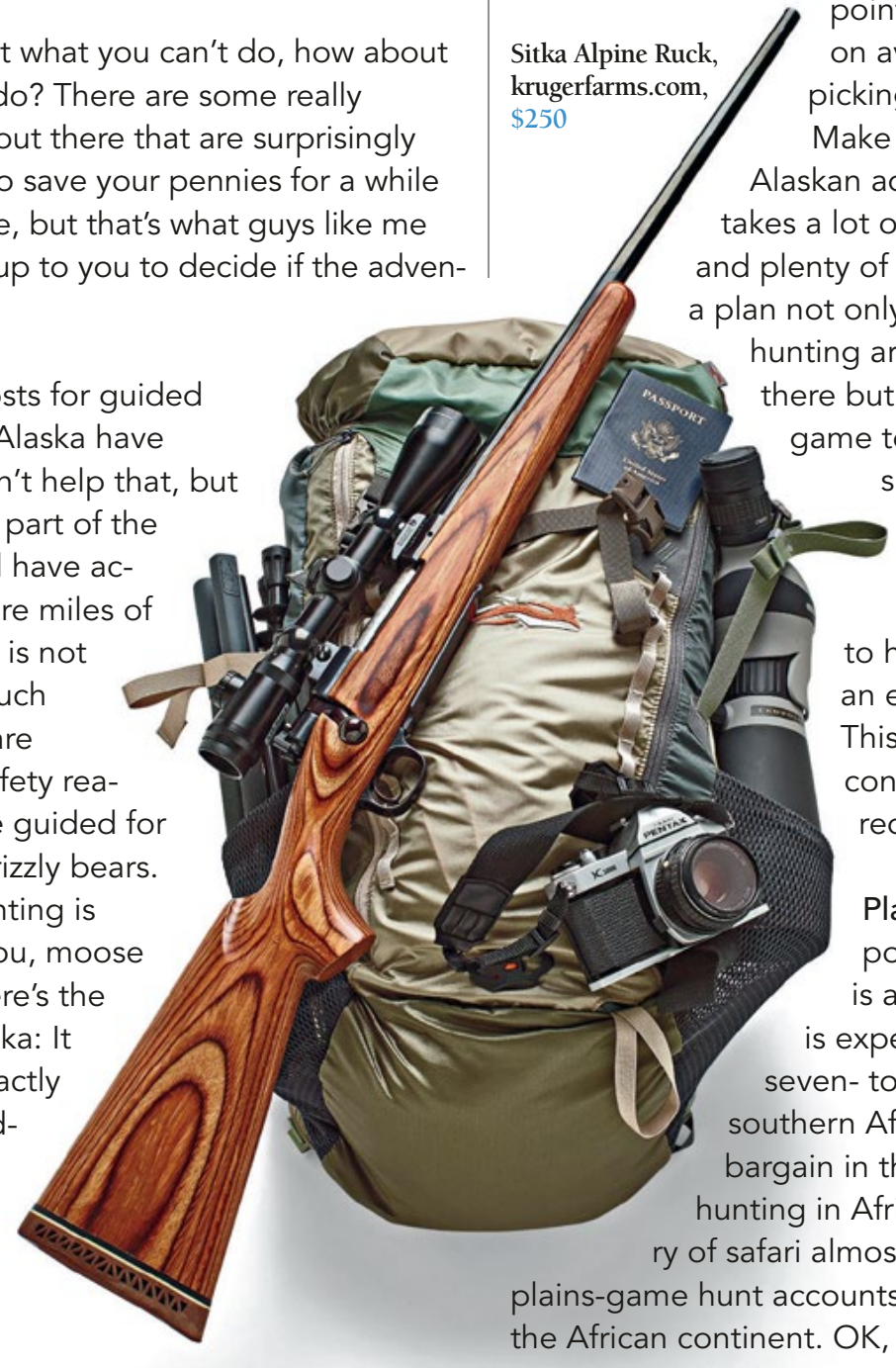
I HEAR IT TOO OFTEN: "Gee, I wish I could do that." Realistically, there are some hunts I could once afford but certainly can't today, whether or not I got them done "back then." There are others I have never been able to afford and never will. Here's another unfortunate reality: It doesn't matter who you are or what you do; long-distance hunts aren't free. I understand that I am often criticized, if not condemned, because I'm fortunate to have done a lot of hunting that many have not been able to do. To some extent, it's a matter of business, lifestyle and priorities. Writing about this stuff is what I do. Even so, I've worked multiple jobs for the last 35 years to support my hunting habit, and my ranch vehicle now has 251,000 miles on the odometer, so I offer no apologies.

Instead of grousing about what you can't do, how about dreaming of what you can do? There are some really awesome adventure hunts out there that are surprisingly affordable. You may need to save your pennies for a while and cut back here and there, but that's what guys like me have done all our lives. It's up to you to decide if the adventure of a lifetime is worth it.

Do-It-Yourself In Alaska Costs for guided hunts in both Canada and Alaska have escalated dramatically. I can't help that, but keep in mind that Alaska is part of the United States. We own and have access to some 600,000 square miles of Alaskan wilderness. Access is not unrestricted; some lands, such as parks and monuments, are not hunted. Primarily for safety reasons, nonresidents must be guided for sheep, goats and brown/grizzly bears. However, do-it-yourself hunting is legal for black bears, caribou, moose and Sitka blacktail deer. Here's the wonderful thing about Alaska: It doesn't matter so much exactly what you're hunting; the adventure comes from being in the Alaskan wilderness, some of the wildest country on earth.

While the access is free, much of the actual hunting is not. The problem is that Alaska has few roads, so an awful lot of that enticing wilderness is reachable only by chartered bush plane. Most small towns have air taxi services, so arranging drop-off and pickup isn't difficult, but this is a major cost in much Alaskan hunting. An option is that a lot of black bear and Sitka deer hunting can be done by boat, both along the long coastline of southeast Alaska and on the offshore islands. Some registered guides use boats as floating camps, but there are also boats for hire — "transporters," in Alaskan terms — who will get you to a good area but cannot participate in the hunt. In the interior, another option is to float a river between a drop-off and pickup point, which is a bold adventure but, on average, more productive than picking one spot to pitch camp.

Sitka Alpine Ruck, krugerfarms.com, $250



Make no mistake; a do-it-yourself Alaskan adventure isn't for everyone. It takes a lot of planning, good equipment and plenty of outdoor savvy. You must have a plan not only for getting into and out of the hunting area and sustaining yourself while there but also a plan for packing your game to the pickup point. Due to the sheer size of the animal, do-it-yourself moose hunting is extremely challenging. Caribou, black bears and deer are easier to handle. Just make sure you have an equally adventurous buddy. This is not something you should consider doing alone, and costs are reduced when shared.

Plains Game In Africa The supposed high cost of African hunting is a myth. Some African hunting is expensive, but much of it is not. A seven- to 10-day plains-game safari in southern Africa is probably the greatest bargain in the hunting world. When I started hunting in Africa back in the '70s, this category of safari almost didn't exist. Today the shorter plains-game hunt accounts for the majority of all safaris on the African continent. OK, so it costs a bit more to hunt

PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



The moose is easily Alaska's most popular game animal, but if you're considering a do-it-yourself moose hunt, you need to do some careful self-evaluation. Are you really up to packing out a moose?



African game varies widely in species and costs. The red hartebeest is colorful and an affordable option while plains-game hunting in southern Africa. You can count on a camp that will be comfortable.

buffalo and more still for cats and elephants. The plains-game safari is still Africa, and you can always take a few extra days to tour national parks and *see* the big stuff.

Pick a couple of the major antelope that you really want, maybe greater kudu and gemsbok, and then pick two or three common animals from a long list: impala, hartebeest, warthog, wildebeest, zebra, etc. In a week, you should take four or five good animals, in 10 days possibly twice that. Total cost won't be much different from a do-it-yourself Alaskan hunt or a good Texas whitetail hunt. With some planning and saving, this is a bucket-list adventure that really is possible and available for most working Americans, and it's an adventure that is enjoyed by people of all ages and from all walks of life. The primary destinations for such safaris are Namibia and South Africa. You will love it, and so will your significant other, whether or not that person is a hunter. Just one caution: Africa is addictive, so it may not turn out to be a "once in a lifetime" splurge.

Ibex In Asia Rule of thumb: Worldwide, most sheep hunts are expensive. Worldwide, many goat hunts are not. Why this should be eludes me. Goats often live in tougher, rougher country than sheep and always offer a challenge. Some goats have modest horns, but the various races of ibex are just plain spectacular, and they often must be hunted in some of the most remote mountains on the planet. Back in the 1920s, when Kermit Roosevelt wrote "East of the Sun, West of the Moon," the long-horned ibex of the Tien Shan Mountains were considered superior trophies to the argali sheep with which they shared their range.

Today, for whatever reason, sheep are valued more highly and priced accordingly. In the high mountains of Central Asia, you can hunt ibex in the same mountains where Marco Polo sheep are hunted, with the same outfitters, from the same camps, at a small fraction of the cost. On today's market, think guided mule deer hunt prices in exchange for a spectacular adventure on the roof of the world. The longest-horned ibex is probably the mid-Asian variety, currently hunted in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Hunts are readily available and reasonably priced, and, provided you do your homework and choose a good outfitter, success is very likely. The ibex with the second-longest horns is probably the Siberian or Altai version, hunted in Mongolia. This is also an inexpensive hunt, not only in actual dollars but in view of the spectacular adventure.

Two things: First, an ibex hunt in Asia is a genuine expedition. You must be in shape for both the altitude and for serious climbing, and you'd better bring an adventurous attitude. Although considerably less expensive, these hunts are generally much more difficult than ibex hunting in Europe. Second, choose your outfitter with care, and check a lot of references. With a good outfit, success is routine, but not all Asian outfitters are good.

Permit Draws In the West There's a lot of great public-land hunting in the American West, and virtually all species can be hunted on a do-it-yourself basis. However, the best overall experience is most likely to come in limited-entry areas that require drawing a permit. Here it depends on what floats your boat. There are great areas for mule deer, elk and pronghorns that are very hard to draw, and permits for limited resources such as sheep, goats and Shiras moose are always hard to draw. Over the years, I've gotten to do a lot of mule deer, elk and pronghorn hunting, so I don't concentrate on these drawings at all, but I've put in for

LETTERS FROM KEITH

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— Elmer Keith, January 1971



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Central Asia has a traditional horse culture, so at least some of the hunting is done by horseback.



After 30 years of applying, Boddington was surprised when he drew an Arizona desert sheep tag in 2008. If you don't apply, you'll never draw.

various sheep tags for 35 years.

For you younger readers, I can't emphasize how important it is to get in the drawings that interest you and stay in them. Thanks to bonus-point and preference-point systems, the longer you apply, the better your odds, so it's a matter of staying in for the long haul. If you don't draw, you get your money back, so while it takes some up-front investment, actual costs are almost nothing.

When you draw the tag, though, it's worth every penny, and you need to be prepared to drop everything and use that tag to its fullest. When you draw a "good" tag, you are in for a really special experience. You can do the research and hunt on your own, or you can hire a guide. Armed with a "scarce" tag, guide fees are reasonable. I've done it both ways, and I've never wasted a "great" tag.

In 35 years, I've drawn three sheep tags, two Shiras moose tags and one Rocky Mountain goat tag. That probably puts me ahead of the game, but these have all been some of my most memorable North American hunts, so I am still in various drawings every year, and I hope I last long enough to draw a couple more times. When (not if) you draw, a great adventure awaits — at a solid bargain. G&A



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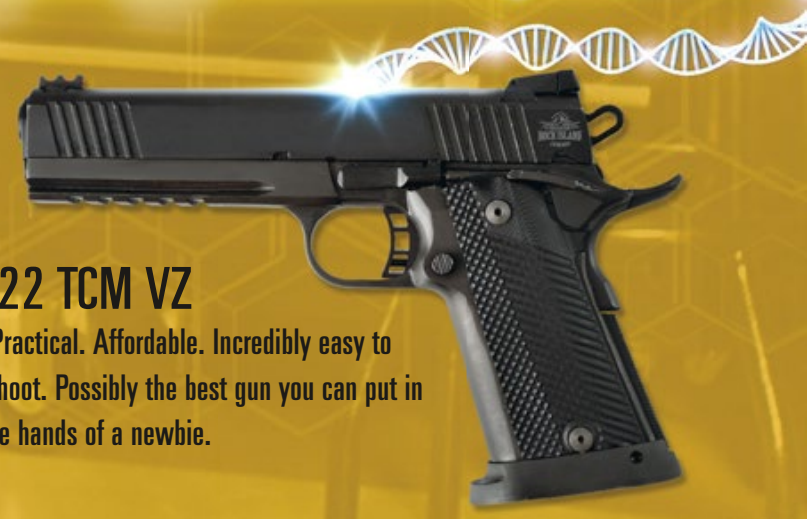
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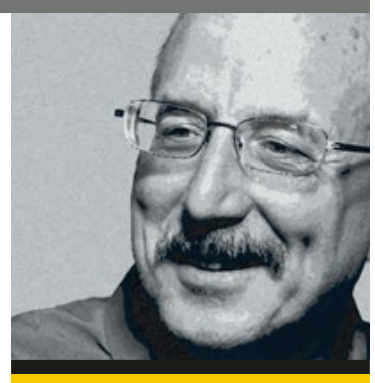
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PATRICK SWEENEY

INDOOR TRAINING

BACK IN THE EARLY DAYS of IPSC shooting, there was a wry observation: "You spend your first hundred-thousand rounds learning to shoot. You spend your second hundred-thousand unlearning the bad habits you learned in the first hundred-thousand." Yes, we used to shoot that much, and some still do. We have learned a lot of things since then, one being that you can master the same skills with half as much ammo. Part of that is due to a heavy emphasis on draw and dry-fire practice. Yet despite ammo prices coming down, it still costs money. Add to that the time to get to and back from the range for each practice session. Then there are the days of inclement weather.

The Answer: It's LaserLyte's Score Tyme Target and Trainer Target. They are both simple in use and description, even while being devilishly complex on the inside. The scoring area of both targets registers the "impact" of the laser beam you have directed at them. They remember where the "hits" were, then display them when you tell them to.

The Score Tyme scores your hits — you can even set it to record for a specified amount of time — then it displays the group and your numerical score. The Trainer Target is simpler and only shows the shots — the group — but doesn't allow you to set a time, nor does it display the score for you.

Both are a blast, and when LaserLyte shows its wares at our Editorial Roundtables, the sessions risk dissolving into gunwriter playtime with impromptu contests. In what other way can you having shooting contests with your buddies in your home and not run the risk of having to explain it to the insurance company?

Practice with LaserLyte's products offers you the tools to improve your scores in gun club matches or on the weekends and for not much more than the time spent and a few AA batteries. When it comes to winning matches, you have a few essential skills to improve. Do these well, and you can win. Don't do these well, and you'll lose, regardless of how much ammunition you grind through in live-fire practice. The fundamentals I'm referring to are trigger control, sight alignment, smooth draw and splits. (LaserLyte can't do much about smooth reloads, but I'd bet it's working on it.)

Once you have the LaserLyte target up and running, learn to shoot groups. Set the target at the farthest distance in your office, laundry room, etc., and sit down. Use a table as a rest. Shoot the smallest group you can. If it is small, then back up. If you have no more room, then you are ready to move up. Stand, and laser-fire for groups. Do it freestyle, strong-hand and weak-hand. Take your time; get good at it. Focus your efforts on a clean trigger press and perfect sight alignment. Don't worry about speed just yet. "This isn't fun," you say? Do you want to win matches or not?

Next we have the draw. You have either the LaserLyte laser trainer pistol or an insert/adapter from LaserLyte to use in your own pistol. If you use your own, make sure not only that the pistol is unloaded but that ammo is nowhere to be found when you go to practice. Trust me; you want to be nearly OCD about this. Get geared up, and wear your holster, mag pouches and (empty; check them twice) magazines. You want this to be as much like the range as you can. You should even wear whatever hat you wear on the range, plus hearing protection. Make it as real as possible.

Set your timer, and start taking some practice draws and laser shots. You aren't looking to set any records; you simply want to get a feel for times. Once you know how fast, smooth and comfortable it is, up the speed. Those who are serious will record times and track hits to plot their progress.

In matches, draws matter. In a regular club-level USPSA or IDPA match, you're going to be drawing three, four,





PHOTOS: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ



The Score Tyme Target includes scoring and timing features (left). You can also pair it with a Trainer Laser Target (above) to practice drills such as Jeff Cooper's El Presidente and Bill Wilson's Bill Drill.



Lasers can be projected to these targets by one of LaserLyte's Trainer Pistols, which are compatible with certain Glock and S&W M&P holsters. Want to use your own handgun? A Laser Trainer Barrel for the Glock 19/23 and universal LT-PRO bore laser are also options.

five times, which doesn't seem like much, but consider the total stage time you'll spend. In a club-level USPSA match with three stages, you might be spending 45 seconds shooting. Which will improve your match results more: shaving three seconds off that time by improving your draw or risking point losses by speeding up your shooting by three seconds? A faster draw is free time deducted from your total.

You can also practice "table starts," where the stage starts with your pistol on a table or in a drawer. Do you know the fastest way to pick up and fire a pistol?

Once you have a smooth draw and you can shoot small groups, you're ready to move on.

On the timer start, move from where you are to behind a barricade and fire a laser beam into your LaserLyte Trainer Target. As Robbie Leatham once remarked to someone who mocked his less than speedy running, "It isn't how fast you get there; it's how fast you get there, ready to shoot, that matters." Robbie crushed his, and our, scores that day.

Then we get to the part everyone wants to excel at: speed. What are your split times? Fast splits depend on recoil recovery and trigger manipulation. Oh, and accuracy. A super-fast miss not only doesn't help, it hurts, so practice splits on the LaserLyte target. Line up the sights, press the trigger, then press it again as fast as you can and still get a hit. This won't help with recoil recovery, but the important part is to get a hit. Misses are fails; do not reward yourself for a fast miss.

I learned the next drill from Brian Enos. It is a variation of the Bill Drill, the one from Bill Wilson. Bill's was to get six hits on an IPSC target at 7 yards in two seconds. Brian's was simpler: six shots into the backstop as fast as possible as long as you did it safely. Why? To learn what very fast movement and cycling of the pistol looked like and train your eye and brain to see it. You're doing the same but with lasers and teaching your eye and trigger finger to bring down the time as much as possible. You'll have to validate this with live ammo at the range, but time spent with lasers should speed the process.

I know that some of you are thinking, *That's great, but I don't shoot matches.* OK, but even if you avoid competition, don't you want to have the smooth, natural, unconscious competence that comes with regular practice? If the time comes and you're faced with a violent threat, don't you want your draw to be smooth, your index to be grooved, your trigger press to be clean and correct?

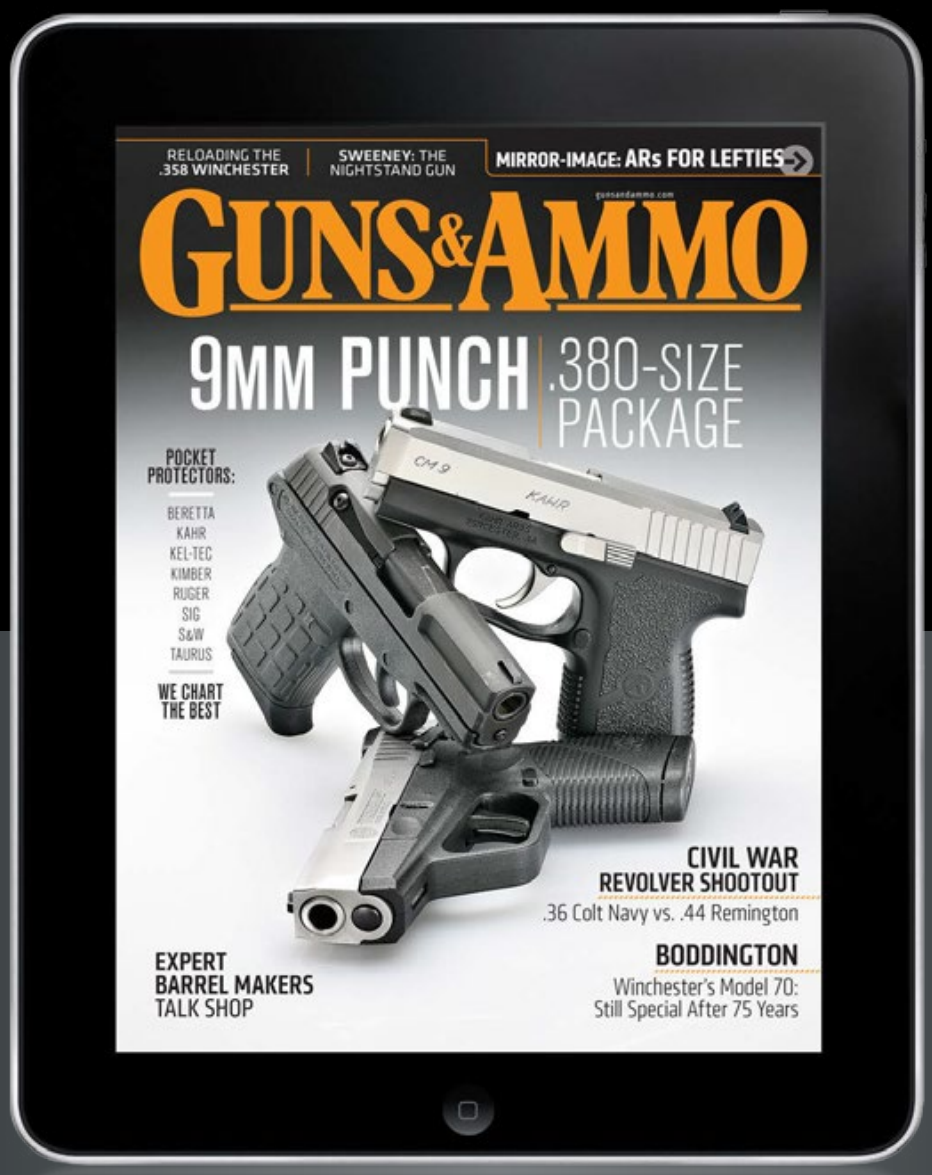
Back in the early 1980s, when I was grinding through my first hundred-thousand rounds, you could reload a thousand rounds for about $75. Inflation makes that seem a lot cheaper than it was, and given today's ammo prices, that first century of ammo cases is going to run you not less than $28,000 new and $15,500 in reloads. I've got a brand-new hybrid sedan in the driveway that costs less than the price of that ammo new, making the cost of either the LaserLyte Score Tyme Target or Trainer Target seem like the deal of the century. G&A



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— Jeff Cooper, 1965

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An oval cutout on the backside of a Yaqui Slide holster should straddle a pants' belt loop, allowing the belt to thread through all three loops to support and prevent movement. Galco's rigid, 1¾-inch SB5 Sport Belt complete with brass hardware was worn throughout the testing of this rig. Like the holster, it was also built from rich saddle leather. $87



GALCO YAQUI SLIDE

WHILE SERVING as a clandestine advisor to suppress Communist insurgencies in Mexico and South America shortly after World War II, Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper, former Guns & Ammo contributor, met Eduardo Chahin from El Salvador, who used an interesting minimalist holster lacking any material past the triggerguard. Cooper was intrigued and is known to have brought back at least one.

By the time Cooper started working with the then-new Colt Commander in the mid-1950s, he envisioned pairing the shortened-slide variant of the Model 1911 with this simple holster design. On his return to the U.S., Cooper took the concept to Milt Sparks, who was, at the time, making holsters in Idaho. The collaborative effort resulted in the Yaqui Slide.

The original Yaqui Slide holster that Cooper brought back differed from most contemporary variations in that it did not have tension units. Galco was the first to add adjustable tensioning screws to this design at the request of a Gunsite rangemaster in 1992. The tension screws allow for a custom fit to the firearm and drawstroke. Today, most manufacturers' interpretations of the Yaqui holster feature some sort of an adjustable tensioning feature.

The simple Yaqui design presents a near-vertical carry angle that makes it a very fast-draw holster. The Galco model utilizes a neutral cant. Another interesting feature with the Yaqui is that the model for large-frame pistols will generally accept other similar-size handguns.

The original Galco Yaqui is attached for outside-the-waistband (OWB) carry by belt slots stitched fore and aft. As with most Yaqui holsters, the 1¾-inch belt channel on the back of Galco's Yaqui features an oval cutout, allowing the user to thread a belt through the holster's loops as well as a pants loop. A different model offers the use of an OWB paddle system for quicker installation. Galco indicates that the belt-loop model currently outsells the paddle design five to one.

The holster body is constructed from thick saddle leather with a bump inside to assist in securing the pistol. Its



Galco offers several solutions for carrying spare magazines. A pair of Galco's tan concealable magazine cases were ordered with Guns & Ammo branding. The carrier is ambidextrous and is also constructed from saddle leather. $50

slight forward cant does help speed up the draw and is said to help prevent the pistol from being snatched from behind. This is a Level I retention holster, but the tension of fit and the open-slide design work effectively. If the pistol is drawn with pressure pushing forward or pulling rearward, the pistol's slide resists being drawn against the canted leverage. A smooth drawstroke, however, will allow clean extraction of a pistol with a standard-profile front sight.

The Yaqui's open-muzzle design is handy for gun owners who find themselves needing to carry the same-model handgun but with different barrel lengths. The Yaqui is available in either right- or left-hand configurations and is offered in tan or black.

The Yaqui remains popular with law enforcement detectives and plainclothes police officers. Though it can be concealed with long jackets and overgarments, the Yaqui is most frequently seen being worn at the range or by citizens in states such as Arizona and Texas with commonly practiced open-carry laws.

45-Day Carry Three models of the Galco Yaqui were ordered for this review: one for a Model 1911, another multigun design for wider semiautomatic pistols and a third with a paddle. The same-colored 1¾-inch gun belt and a pair of friction-fit spare magazine pouches were also ordered from Galco to complete the carry rig. To illustrate the company's *a la carte* custom services, I had my samples embossed with the Guns & Ammo logo.

Fit and finish was first class, and after 45 days only minimal abrasive wear can be seen inside any of the holsters being evaluated. Cracks can be seen on the belt where stress from daily wear has been applied, but it is holding together far better than most simulated-leather belts containing a cardstock or nylon core. I'd argue that any sign of wear on the belt doesn't detract from this rig's appearance but adds a bit of "been there, done that" character.

The holster did little to protect the guns, however. A CZ 75 and Glock 17 were carried for a few days in a large-frame Yaqui model, which left rub marks, indicating that

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finish could wear with extended use. This holster design and large-frame pistol combo handles well, but it should not be used by portly fellows due to a high balance from the weight in the grip that comes with double-stacked magazine capacities. Belly fat will push against the grip, which could shove the pistol's frame diagonally away from the body and create the risk of ejecting the pistol when sitting in any seat having an armrest. Another week was devoted to carrying a full-size Colt Series 70 Government Model under a long jacket, which presents another consideration in that the long slide would occasionally hang up on the aftermarket front sight or dustcover during the drawstroke. If you are used to using a canted holster, I suggest that you practice your drawstroke with this one at the range before changing rigs and wearing a Yaqui.

Another point of consideration is that, although you won't experience the usual wearing of finish at the muzzle end of a blued handgun, the Yaqui does rub bluing from the frame near the front triggerguard where the tension is applied.

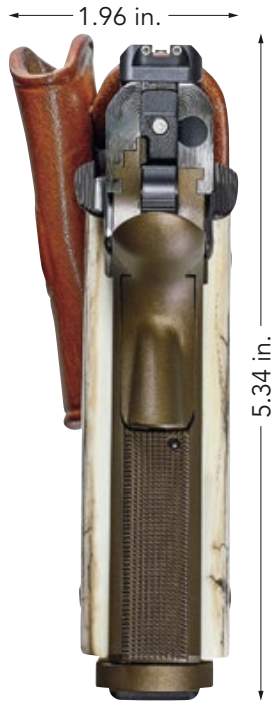
The Yaqui really shines with Commander-style 1911s. For 30 days, a custom 1911 from Republic Forge was carried, which features a 4¼-inch barrel in a Damascus-steel slide atop a bronze Cerakote frame. This Cerakote finish remains unaffected by daily carry, a real testament to the quality of this type of finish.

Jeff Cooper once said that when you take out your pistol and walk without it, the holster doesn't really appear to be there. He was right, which could be important if you're heading into a building or place of business where the carrying of a handgun is prohibited. For OWB carry, I would have no reservations in recommending the classic Yaqui for use with Commander-length slides on a 1911. Short and simple goes a long way. G&A

— Eric R. Poole

MANUFACTURER:	Galco, 800-874-2526, galcogunleather.com
MODEL:	Yaqui Slide Belt Holster
MATERIALS:	Saddle leather
CARRY TYPE:	OWB
RETENTION TYPE:	Level 1
ADJUSTABILITY:	Tension adjustable
MSRP:	$66
HANDGUN FIT:	M1911 (tested), 20+ gun manufacturers available
ACCESSORY RAIL ACCOMMODATIONS:	None
POSITIONS TO CARRY:	Strong side, behind the hip
AVG. TIME TO ATTACH:	1 minute, 25 seconds
COMFORT RATING:	4/5
CONCEALMENT CLOTHING:	Long jacket
AVG. DRAW-TO-FIRE TIME:	1.7 seconds

Notes: Draw-to-fire time is the average of five clean draws from a concealment garment, presented square to a stationary target positioned at 21 feet with an A-zone hit.





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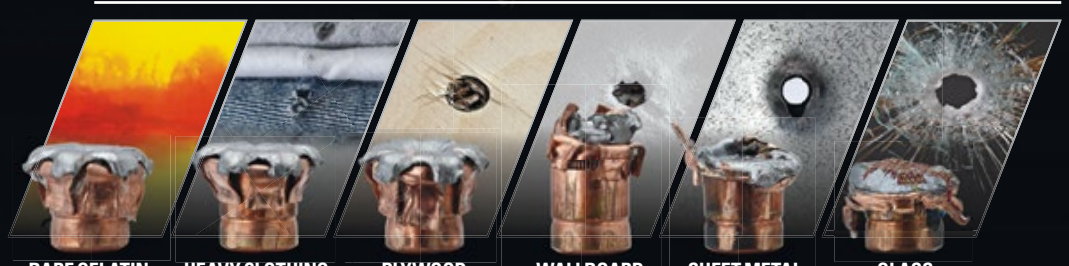
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*"There are **three main principles** associated with optimal shooting positions ..."*



TOM BECKSTRAND

ACCURACY TESTING, PT. 1

EVERY MONTH, Guns & Ammo tests rifles for accuracy. The results are a pretty common source of quantifiable information that our readers have expressed an interest in, so we make sure to put our best effort into getting you the most comprehensive information possible. Like any activity that gets a lot of time and attention, we've accumulated a library of testing techniques that work, and we've identified several pitfalls that shooters must avoid if they hope to ever know a rifle's true potential.

Accuracy testing begins with building a good shooting position. Too often, we see shooters so focused on shooting and what's happening at the target that they never learn how to create a solid shooting foundation. Without that foundation, we introduce variables into our marksmanship equation that degrade our overall performance. Where possible, we're going to try to avoid confining the conversation to testing equipment and focus on teaching shooting-position principles.

The Big Three There are three main principles associated with optimal shooting positions: Get stable, address pre-ignition vibration, and test your position. There's a conversation associated with each, but as long as we understand and apply these three principles, we're well on our way to really knowing how our rifles will perform and not limiting that performance with our own inability.

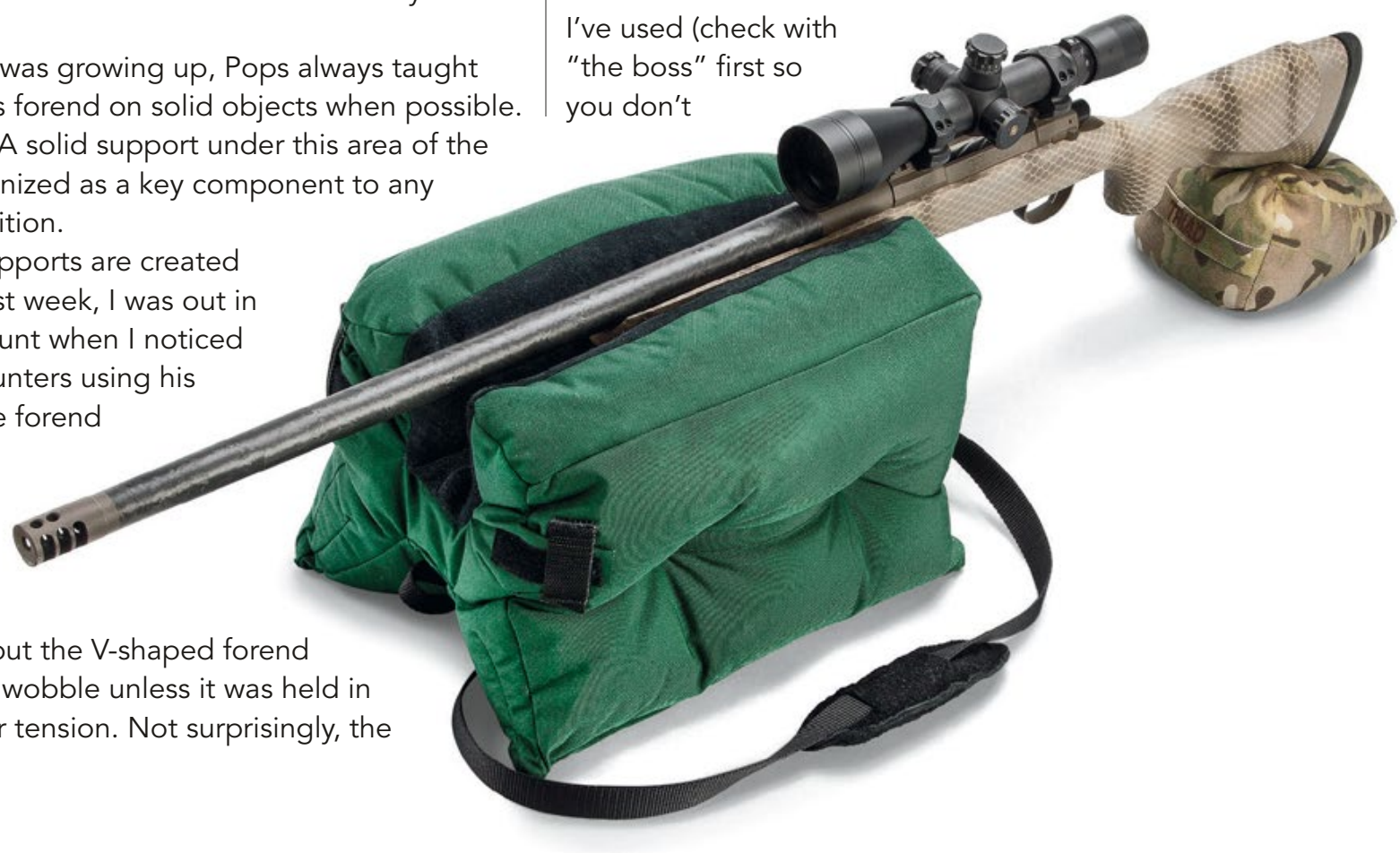
Get Stable When I was growing up, Pops always taught me to rest the rifle's forend on solid objects when possible. Wise council, that. A solid support under this area of the rifle is widely recognized as a key component to any good shooting position.

Not all forend supports are created equal, however. Last week, I was out in Texas on a sheep hunt when I noticed one of my fellow hunters using his backpack under the forend to confirm his zero and compare group sizes prior to starting the hunt. The setup wasn't a bad one, but the V-shaped forend allowed the rifle to wobble unless it was held in place with muscular tension. Not surprisingly, the rifle was zeroed just fine, but it wasn't shooting quite as well as the others. This wasn't the rifle's fault; the position just wasn't as stable as it could be.

When we do accuracy testing here at G&A, we want our position to be so stable that the rifle stays in place even if we walk away from it. Simply laying the rifle across supports is definitely better than offhand shooting, especially in the field, but it will cost us tenths of an inch when we're accuracy testing. Our goal is to eliminate everything that costs us even one-tenth of an inch, and it starts with the forend support.

Good forend supports will come in the form of either sandbags or bipods. Benchresters and F-class shooters have some amazing setups, but these are specialized devices that probably cost more than we're willing to spend.

Sandbags are my preferred forend rest because they not only greatly assist stability, they also do an excellent job of eliminating pre-ignition vibration (we'll talk more about that later). Good forend sandbags should make as much contact with just the forend as possible and wrap around the sides of the rifle to prevent it from wobbling; eight inches of contact is better than 2 inches. Sinclair International has an excellent selection of sandbags for those wanting a finished product or who accuracy test often. For you economy and casual shooters, a pillowcase half-full of sand is one of the best rests I've used (check with "the boss" first so you don't



PHOTOS: BRAXTON LEE PETTY



Our goal should be to step away from our rifle without it moving. This ensures a stable position that requires no muscular tension to maintain.



We favor sandbags that support and encircle the entire forend because they help reduce pre-ignition vibration. These bags work just fine on short forends as long as they don't touch the barrel.





A rear bag is just as essential as a front rest but is often overlooked. Wedge-shaped bags like this one can support the rear of the rifle but can also be used to make point-of-aim elevation adjustments.

accidentally grab one of her "good ones").

Bipods are also a solid choice for accuracy testing because they firmly attach to the rifle and keep it from wobbling around, regardless of the forend's width or shape. As long as the bipod's legs are on dirt, grass or a padded surface such as a shooting mat, they can help us produce exceptional accuracy. Bipod legs placed directly on concrete or wood (even if the legs have rubber feet) will open group sizes anywhere from .2 to .7 MOA due to pre-ignition vibration.

The most neglected aspect of accuracy testing is the rear bag. It is an absolutely essential item and is mandatory here at Guns & Ammo. Any rifle without a rear bag must rely on the shooter's muscular tension to aim, and muscular tension introduces error.

My favorite rear bags are wedge-shaped and allow elevation adjustments by moving fore and aft on the stock toe. A rear bag that also wraps up along the sides of the stock is beneficial because it helps kill some of the rifle's vibration. The important concept to remember here is that the rear bag is essential and that its two main purposes are to give us stability and allow us to make fine point-of-aim elevation adjustments once we are behind the rifle. Never leave home without at least one.

Pre-ignition Vibration Once we build our position, we begin the process of eliminating pre-ignition vibration (PIV) from the rifle prior to accuracy testing. PIV occurs when the trigger releases the sear and the hammer strikes the back of the firing pin (e.g., ARs) or when the firing pin snaps home (e.g., bolt guns). In both cases, we have metal slamming into metal at a time when we need to be the most precise. PIV is what causes our crosshairs to jump when we dry-fire our rifle. We'll take a detailed look at the phenomenon in a later article, but for now we'll just focus on how to get rid of it.

Sand and the human body are good vibration dampeners. Forend sandbags that have lots of contact with the rifle and wrap up around the sides of the forend do a better job of eliminating PIV than smaller bags, and that's why we favor them.

When settling behind the rifle, we like to get so close to the gun that our relaxed body pushes the rifle forward into the sandbag or bipod. When using a bipod, this technique is referred to as "loading." The slight forward pressure should require no muscular tension to maintain, yet it does a great job of eliminating PIV. We can load a sandbag just as well as we can load a bipod. Loading is our first and best tool for eliminating PIV.

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We should never have our bipod resting directly on wood or concrete surfaces, even if the legs have rubber feet. The hard surface exacerbates the rifle's vibration and can easily add .2 MOA to our groups.



Putting the bipod feet on a padded shooting mat eliminates the effects of vibration.

Likewise, the rear bag can also be called up to help eliminate PIV. Rear bags that allow us to pinch the bag into the sides of the stock help deaden vibration due to the increased contact between sandbag and rifle. This doesn't necessarily mean we need one of the rear bags that have "ears"; we can simply use the parts of the bag that squish up on the sides when the stock's toe sinks into it.

Checking Position A rifle will tell us if it's unhappy with our position when we dry fire. G&A's rifleshooters like to crank the magnification up above 15X and watch for movement of the crosshair when the trigger breaks. If we're not loading directly down the centerline axis of the bore, our off-axis pressure will combine with PIV to make our crosshairs hop off our point of aim. Hopefully, the distance is small, but even a .2-MOA shift means we're not shooting to the full potential of the rifle/ammunition combination.

We should only begin accuracy testing once we've eliminated all reticle hop. If we can't eliminate reticle movement during dry fire, we're not really evaluating the rifle as much as we are the shooter. If you've never worked to get rid of reticle hop and have just focused on getting comfortable behind the gun prior to shooting, expect to see anywhere from a .2- to a 1-MOA improvement after applying these principles. G&A



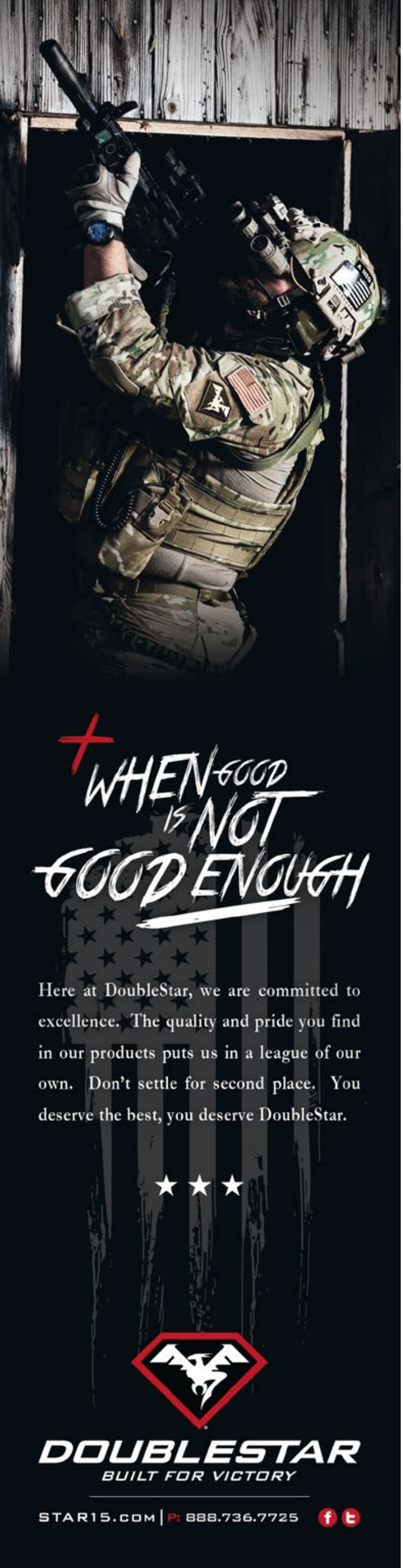
Using nothing but our hand for a rear support doesn't provide the stability necessary for good accuracy testing.



A rear bag can be pinched into the sides of the stock to further reduce the effects of vibration.



Wedge-shaped rear bags offer a lot of contact with the stock's toe. More contact is always a good idea when we're trying to get stable and kill vibration.



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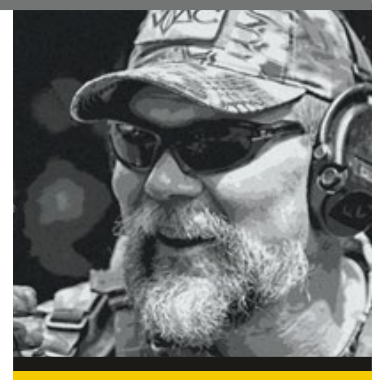


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SETTING UP MY GO-TO AR

I GET A LOT OF QUESTIONS on my opinion of the perfect setup for a "go-to" AR. Below I've listed several of the most frequently asked questions and my answers regarding how I set up mine.

The general-purpose rifle is so modular that we can easily pick and choose our setup, and if it doesn't work, we can quickly rethink the process and start over again. Configuring your rifle is totally up to you, but I'll give you my two cents on what has worked for me. I will also try to answer most of the questions about what I use, why I use it and how it helps. Check out my setup, and see what you think. After some experimentation, you'll eventually come up with what works for you. I try my best to keep an open mind. There are always new tricks and techniques coming down the line, so check them out, and see if there is any validity in them for you.



What is your preferred do-anything optic type and configuration? I don't have a specific optic that is the only one for me. I have groups of optics ranging from red dot sights to fixed-power scopes right on up to the variable-power glass that is becoming more and more popular. In reality, the magnified optic has always been popular for accuracy, but speed often suffers. If you select a variable-powered scope, you could have high magnification at the top end, which in turn means too much magnification on the bottom end. This has recently been fixed with the introduction of several true 1X-to-whatever-powered scopes now on the market. I still shoot faster with a red dot up close, but when stretching distances from 50 yards out to as far as 500, the magnified scope makes the impossible pretty attainable. My go-to choice for an optic is the Leupold 1-6X VX-6. Retailed at roughly $1,200, this scope is not that expensive and works well. With its illuminated center dot, you can drive the gun pretty quickly up close, and in hours of limited visibility, the dot is an awesome tool.

Another factor with regard to the Leupold is that it is designed, machined and assembled in the United States, just like the scope mounts I use: Alamo's Four Star DLOC mount or Unity Tactical's Light Weight scope mount.

Backup iron sights (BUIS) go hand in hand with the optic-choice dilemma. If you select a magnified optic, do you really need BUIS? The truthful answer is no. I don't believe that you need backup iron sights with a high-quality scope, but here's my problem: I have had BUIS on carbines for as long as I can remember. Even when soldiers and I were issued CAR-15s with carry handles, we were able to use the irons if needed by looking under our red dots. Because of this habit, I continue to use them today. That said, my go-to choice for BUIS is Troy Industries' DOA flip-up sights, which are constructed of strong aluminum. Due to their rugged construction, they can be used as a primary sight if desired.

At what range do you zero your AR, and why? Once I have decided what sight to mount, I must determine the optimal distance to zero my carbine. For many years while I was in the Army, the common soldier was required to zero at 25 meters. This is a good example of what not to do. I would suggest that you study your ballistic curve in relation to the sight height of your selected optic and make an educated choice. My opinion, which is backed by a stack of ballistic charts, has driven me to the 50-yard line. If you are shooting iron sights or red dot optics that are mounted 2½ inches above your bore line, the 50-yard zero shines. With this zero, you will be on at 50 and approximately 160. Remember, this is with my loadings and their velocities, so check your ballistics with an online application or a ballistic program, and confirm with live fire. When I shoot a magnified optic on an AR, I usually zero at 100 yards, which works well for me and allows easy holdovers at distances of 200 and 300 yards.

PHOTOS: LUKAS LAMB



The Leupold VX-6 1-6X is set up in a Alamo Four Star Mount. The Unity Tactical Lightweight mount is also a versatile choice.



This free-float handguard is a slick-sided tube with movable rail sections.



Di-Optic Aperture BUIS from Troy Industries are fast and accurate. They will also work as a primary iron sight if needed.



Modular triggers are here to stay. They do not require a gunsmith to install and (usually) don't have to be adjusted.

What's your choice for a free-floating handguard? If I have the option of a slick, free-float tube with movable rails, I am on that thing like a hobo on a ham sandwich. Less is more with a system such as this. My preference is to purchase a carbine with a free-floated tube installed at the factory, and, as such, I use the Viking Tactics Carbine from Smith & Wesson for this very reason. Its gas system is secured with taper pins, resulting in a super-strong, reliable fit. I've never had a tapered-pin gas block come loose. If you choose to replace your existing handguard with a free-floated system, I recommend either using the original gas block or replacing it with a well-fitted, securely mounted system.

Are you a fan of trigger replacement? I like a nice trigger and prefer a single stage over a two stage in my 5.56 guns. The only time I use a two stage is in a .308/7.62 AR. I use a VTAC Modular trigger, as it's designed to my specifications. When I designed the trigger, I selected two trigger profiles, the standard curve and a straight trigger with a small bump on the bottom end. Either will do the job, but I'm able to shoot faster with the straight trigger. The pull weights of most of my AR triggers fall into the 3½- to 4½-pound range. There are lighter triggers out there, but for a daily-use AR, I'm comfortable with these weights.

Do you like 45-degree safety levers? Picking up a student's AR from the line one day, I noticed he had a 45-degree ambidextrous thumb safety on his carbine. I tried it and was not impressed at the time. A year later, I had a custom carbine built, and without my approval, the gunsmith installed a 45-degree ambidextrous thumb safety. When I received the rifle, I was not happy, but I spent some time with it anyway. I must say, an old dog can learn new tricks. I absolutely love the safety now. The limited movement of it decreases the amount that the opposite side of the safety contacts my hand. This is a nice feature. With standard ambidextrous safeties, I always felt like they were binding against my hand. The other enhancement is the ease with which the safety can be engaged. With less movement, you can easily place the carbine on Safe. This is especially nice for those of us who shoot a lot from the support side.

Do you condone the use of a vertical grip? The vertical grip is an enhancement that some feel is not needed on the tactical carbine. I would wholeheartedly disagree with this stance. The vertical grip allows for easy handling as well as use while shooting from nonstandard positions. I also use the vertical grip when shooting with only one arm to hook knees, cars, feet or whatever happens to be handy at the time. It is important for me to teach folks how to continue with and win the fight, even when operating at less than 100 percent. The vertical grip also dovetails nicely when used in conjunction with a light.

What about lights and light mounts? I like lights and IR lasers on my AR, but I don't participate in as many nighttime operations as I once did when I was in the military, so the laser is only used when I have a chance to play in the dark with night vision goggles.

As far as lights go, here are my prerequisites: The light must be lightweight, have an extremely bright focused beam, include a switch that allows for constant on without

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holding a button and work with my light mount. So far, I've found a couple that fit perfectly. One is the SureFire VTAC light that it produces for our company, which features a Scout Light head mated to a round L4 body and a clickable tailcap with a raised rim designed to protect the button from accidental activation. My second choice is a Streamlight plastic light, which has three settings: constant, strobe and low. I wouldn't be a fan of this light except it is programmable and easy to use. It's inexpensive and has proven to be durable thus far.

What kind of sling do you prefer? Slings are important in the business I am in. If you have a tactical AR, you must have a sling, and it shouldn't come as a surprise that my go-to sling is a Viking Tactics two-point quick-adjust sling. Judging from the number of copies being produced by others in this market, I'm guessing they like it, too. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, at least that is what someone once said. For several reasons, I prefer a two point that is adjustable. Foremost is the need for a sling to control the rifle when you can't keep your hands on your AR. If you use a single point, you are going to have a carbine swinging in the wind, clanking on everything from cars to concrete walls, knees and occasionally the family jewels. Single points do not work well when crawling over walls, cuffing suspects or treating the wounded. When it comes time to climb or transition to your pistol, the two point quickly adjusts to allow for these events. Having the rifle secured to your chest or back makes these tasks a breeze. I do prefer to have the sling rubber-banded to the AR when carried in a case or vehicle, which allows for easy access without getting tangled in the sling or catching it on shifters or emergency-brake levers.

How many rounds are in your magazines? Where are your go-to magazines? I am tired of the "28 versus 30 rounds in the magazine" debate, but until you figure it out for yourself, the debate will continue. I have been in situations when an extra two rounds mattered, so I have a soft spot in my heart for 30-rounders topped off to the brim. I am a fan of 30, not 31 rounds in the magazine. Thirty-one rounds will cause issues with seating the magazine, even though some magazines allow 31 to easily be loaded into the magazine. With the exception of a few new GI magazines, most out there will have the last round on the top right when loaded with 30. This is the important fact to remember: I use the movement of the top round from the right to the left as an indicator for a correctly loaded AR. If you load 28, that's fine; just don't come running to me when you run out of ammo.

I store one magazine in the AR, and the others are ready to go in a chest rig, on my belt or on my vest. If I have one magazine pouch, it will be located on my left hip, just behind my pistol magazine pouches, and it is what I affectionately refer to as the "Happy Mag." The only difference is that when I wear a vest, the pistol pouches move to my vest, whereas the Happy Mag stays on my hip.



Battle Arms Development 45-degree ambidextrous safety levers. This setup allows for easy manipulation when shooting right- or left-handed.



Lamb prefers a shortened vertical grip that attaches directly to the free-floated handguard. This model is made by VTAC/Unity Tactical.



If you are going to carry a General Purpose Rifle, it needs to have a light. Here are two options. Left: VTAC light mount with Streamlight PolyTac light mounted for over-the-top activation. Right: VTAC light mount with SureFire VTAC L4U 500-lumen light mounted for activation while gripping the vertical grip. Brighter is better.



HORNADY .223 TAP 55 GR.

Can you recommend an ammo type/barrel twist? I would prefer to use the same ammo for both missions and training sessions, but since I am no longer an employee of Uncle Sugar, I've had to lower my standards a little. For duty or mission ammunition, my choice would be Hornady 70-grain GMX Barrier fodder. It performs well through auto glass, sheetmetal and wood; it just excels. If 70-grainers happen to be scarce, the runner-up would be the 55-grain GMX. Hornady makes them in 50, 55 and 70. I would only choose the 50 as a last resort; heavier is better as far as I am concerned, especially when dealing with barriers. Black Hills Ammunition also loads a 70-grain Barnes Triple-Shock in 5.56, but it's not available to us mere mortals. It also offers a 55- and a 62-grain loading with the Barnes TSX bullet, which work nicely.

For training, I use what I can get: nasty, 55-grain, bulk-loaded ammo or even a few steel-case loads if I have to. I also utilize frangible ammunition for shooting steel during close-range training sessions.

Since I have selected weights in the 70-grain neighborhood, twist rate plays a role in success. If you use a 1:9-inch-twist barrel, you may have stability issues



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Lamb always loads 30 rounds in his 30-rounders. The top round will be on the right when the magazine is fully loaded. Check your magazines to ensure this is the case with the gear before heading out.



A 1:8-inch twist rate is Lamb's preference, but a 1:7-inch twist will work just fine as well. Pictured: Viking Tactics Signature Series stainless steel fluted barrel manufactured by Christensen Arms.

with loadings heavier than 65 grains. For practice, I sometimes shoot 75- and 77-grain loadings, so a quicker twist rate is paramount. Standard Mil-Spec barrels can be had in 1:7 twist, and they will get the work done. If I have a go-to twist rate for my barrels, it would be 1:8, as they have been the best performers so far and split the difference between the 1:7 and 1:9.

What's your preferred type of muzzle device for general purposes? There is a difference between a muzzlebrake and a flash-hider. If you use a muzzlebrake, you're going to have excessive flash. The only way to reduce the flash is by adding a sound suppressor to the brake. I prefer flash-hiders. This doesn't mean I don't have ARs with obnoxiously loud and brightly flashing brakes, but my go-to muzzle device is a flash-hider. My favorites are the SureFire 212A, which accepts the attachment of SureFire's sound suppressor; the YHM Phantom; or a standard A2 birdcage.

Well, you asked for it. This is my go-to list for the AR-type rifle. What really matters is that you have your AR set up to your liking. I have tried many things and do deviate slightly, but I generally stay pretty close to the setup I have described in this column. At the end of the day, if you bring the horse to the track, you have to ride it. Be sure you don't bring a nag. G&A



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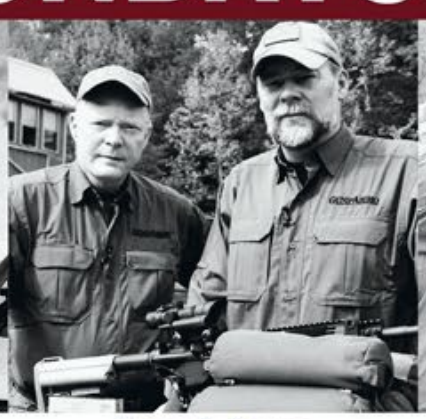
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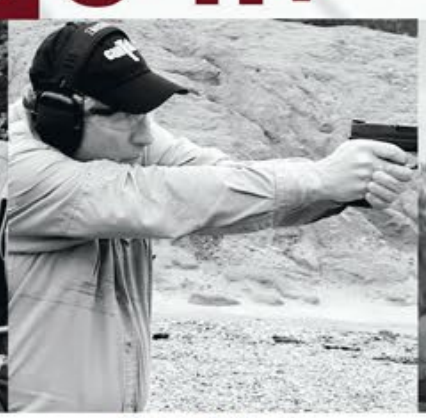
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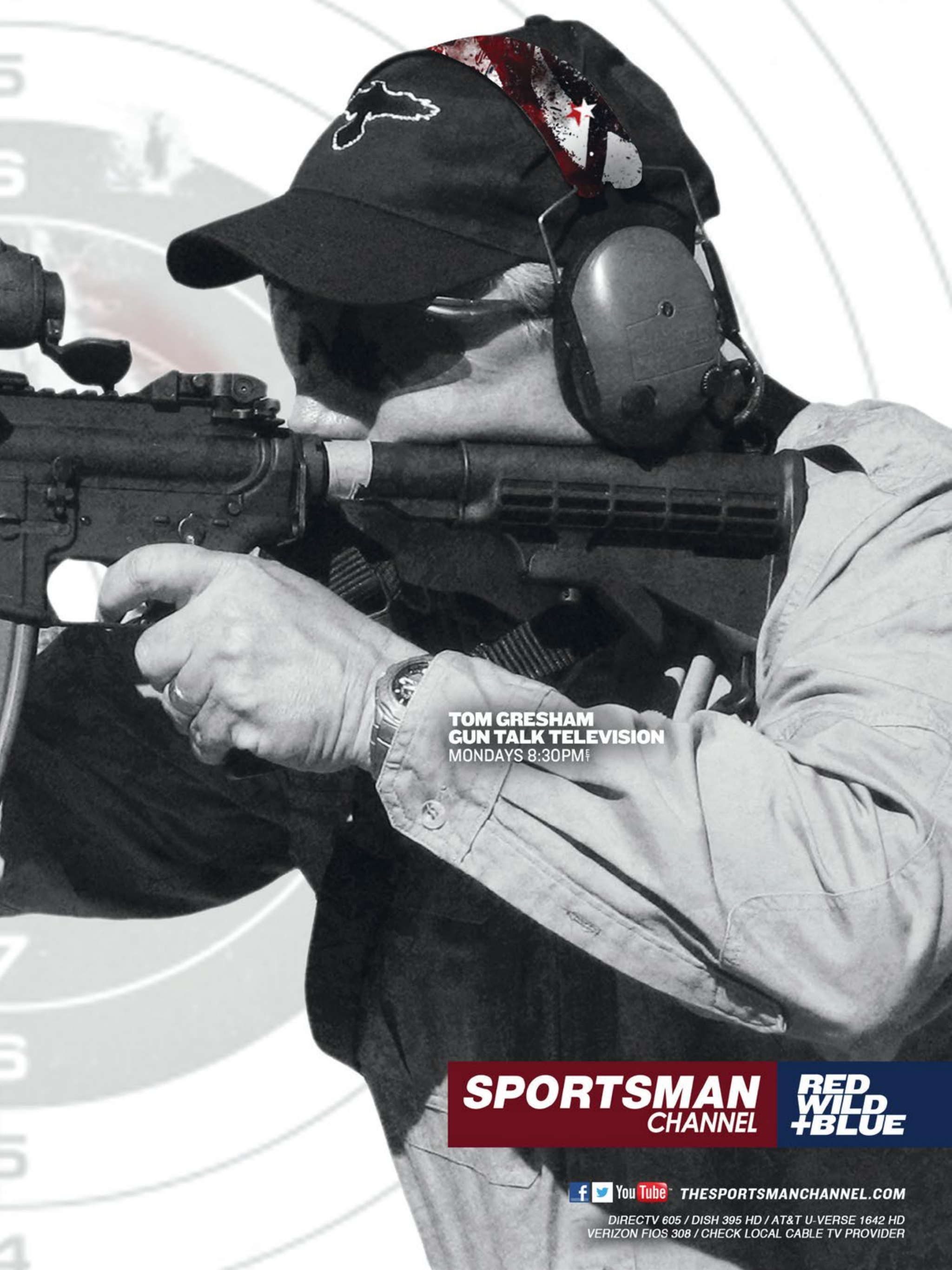
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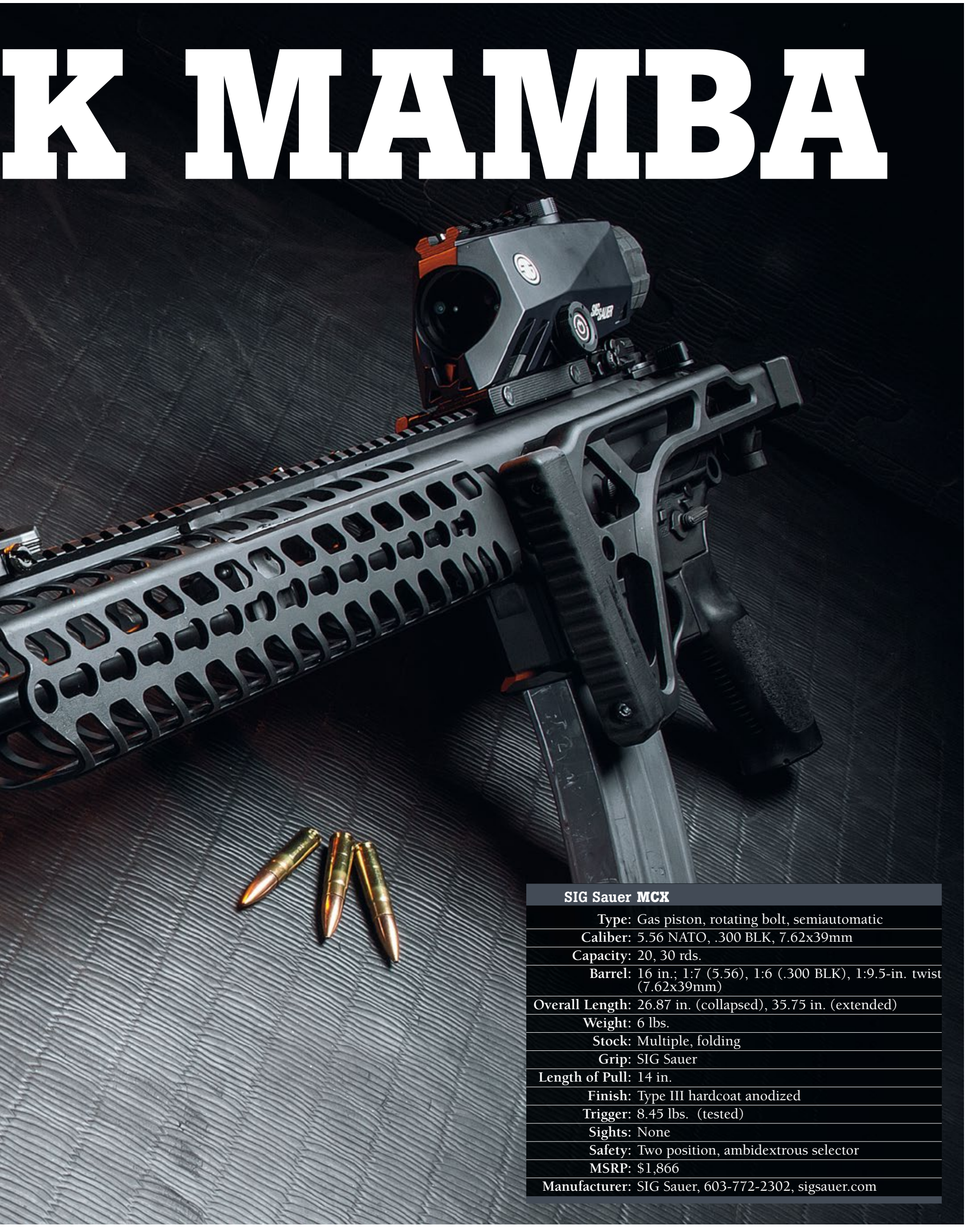
The new SIG MCX configures to meet many diverse needs. (And we shot it in .300 Blackout.)

WORDS BY TOM BECKSTRAND
PHOTOS BY SEAN UTLEY & BRAXTON LEE PETTY

TEN YEARS AGO, I used two rifles daily in Afghanistan. My daytime rifle was a customized AK47 that had its barrel shortened to 8 inches and a side-folding stock. It was super-portable and fired .30-caliber projectiles. Big bullets make big holes, so I carried this rifle as often as the circumstances would allow.

My nighttime rifle was the issued M4 with SOPMOD package that had a longer barrel and could accommodate a suppressor. When set up with an IR laser and used with night vision, this rifle was ideal for low-light use because it offered good ballistic performance while minimizing the noise and light that attracted unwanted attention.

K MAMBA



SIG Sauer MCX	
Type:	Gas piston, rotating bolt, semiautomatic
Caliber:	5.56 NATO, .300 BLK, 7.62x39mm
Capacity:	20, 30 rds.
Barrel:	16 in.; 1:7 (5.56), 1:6 (.300 BLK), 1:9.5-in. twist (7.62x39mm)
Overall Length:	26.87 in. (collapsed), 35.75 in. (extended)
Weight:	6 lbs.
Stock:	Multiple, folding
Grip:	SIG Sauer
Length of Pull:	14 in.
Finish:	Type III hardcoat anodized
Trigger:	8.45 lbs. (tested)
Sights:	None
Safety:	Two position, ambidextrous selector
MSRP:	$1,866
Manufacturer:	SIG Sauer, 603-772-2302, sigsauer.com



Steel inserts handle the MCX's high-traffic areas. Here we see the steel cam-pin path insert that prevents the inside of the receiver from getting chewed up. Once worn, it is easily replaced.



The operating system has dual recoil springs that ride above the bolt carrier and next to the piston op rod. The two springs last much longer than a single heavier spring.

Using two rifles in Afghanistan was a nightmare that required twice as many magazines (cluttering up our vehicle) and a lot of training to retain familiarity with two very different designs. None of us have to do that anymore. SIG Sauer has identified the best characteristics of each of those two rifles, improved them and rolled it all into one tight little package called the SIG MCX.



SOF Origins The SIG MCX project started at SIG Sauer in 2011, but the movement began inside the Special Operations community in late 2009. Kevin Brittingham and Ethan Lessard worked for another company back then, but Kevin was approached by one element within the community and asked if he'd heard of the .300 Whisper. This unit was buying rifles built for this cartridge and found that less than half of them would work as reliably as needed. They loved the cartridge but wanted a rifle that worked.

From that point on through 2010, guidance on what this element wanted to see took shape. The rifle would be similar in size to an HK MP5SD (a suppressed 9mm submachine gun) and had to be at least as quiet. This unit in particular had been using MP5s for several decades, and those guns were 25 years past their life cycle. Design work on both the new rifle and cartridge proceeded throughout 2010, but in 2011 Kevin and Ethan left the company. Ethan accepted an offer from SIG Sauer, and Kevin, after running his own company for many years, decided to take a break from the industry.

SIG Sauer's work on the project started in earnest in 2011. From the beginning, the SIG MCX was designed to run with a suppressor. It also had to be military-reliable across multiple calibers. That's a designer's nightmare. Multiple calibers across multiple barrel lengths is hard enough, but when we add the disparate pressure curves that come with using powders designed for both rifle and pistol cartridges in the same semiauto rifle, we present gun designers with the proverbial Gordian knot.

The SOF guys were looking for a rifle that could handle 5.56x45mm, .300 BLK and, with a new bolt, 7.62x39mm. The interest in 5.56 is pretty obvious, but .300 BLK might surprise some. The reason .300 BLK is popular is that it doesn't experience the radical velocity loss when we shorten the barrel. The 5.56 load is heavily dependent on muzzle velocity for good terminal effects, velocity it loses when we chop the barrel on CQB rifles. The .300 BLK loses about half as much velocity when we shorten the barrel, but it also fires a much heavier bullet that helps generate good terminal effects. The .300 BLK is also much easier to suppress effectively and is gaining popularity in SOF circles.

Interest in the 7.62x39mm comes from the occasional SOF need to leave a foreign signature on target and the ability to locally procure that cartridge anywhere in the world. It has slightly inferior ballistics when compared with the .300 BLK but an aggressive case taper that makes it easy to extract. The tapered case can also be a curse because it gives the long, straight magazine well of the AR-15 fits. Since the SIG MCX uses a standard AR lower, I asked Kevin Brittingham how SIG Sauer solved the long-standing problem of getting the 7.62x39 to function reliably in a magazine that fits in an AR lower. Many manufacturers have tried and failed.

"No one has spent the money on R&D and manufacturing [that] SIG has," Brittingham says. "We've developed a new magazine that can handle the case taper."

This is welcome news to all AR lovers because SIG Sauer's 7.62x39 magazine should work in any AR-pattern rifle.

Key Design Points Cory Newman headed up SIG Sauer's design team. His team focused on making the rifle light

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SIG is loading .300 BLK ammunition that works well in the MCX. Initial offerings will be match ammunition.



The MCX has many stock options. Here we see the very slender side-folder that adds minimal bulk to the rifle.

and modular, as per their clients' guidance. They quickly settled on a piston system with dual recoil springs. Piston systems are a great way to regulate the speed with which the action cycles because they can easily bleed off excess gases. When we jump back and forth between short and long barrels and .300 BLK (which uses pistol powder) and 5.56, we would have such wide swings in port pressure with a direct-impingement system that the rifle wouldn't work.

The piston system on the 5.56 and the 7.62x39 barrels have operating rods and gas blocks that share a similar length with carbine-length gas systems on ARs. An operating system of this length is sure to generate enough pressure to cycle the bolt and, thanks to the piston system, bleed excessive gas out the gas block.

The .300 BLK has a system similar in length to pistol-length gas systems. This is necessary for those times when the SIG MCX will be used with subsonic ammunition without a suppressor. The small amount of pistol powder used in this round doesn't generate much pressure, so the gas block has to be moved closer to the chamber to capitalize on the higher gas pressures found there.

The recoil springs ride above the barrel and make it possible to get rid of the classic AR receiver extension and replace it with a side-folding stock. Much like my long-lost daytime rifle, the SIG MCX's side-folding stock makes the rifle much more portable than AR variants. By using two recoil springs, SIG disperses the load and gives each spring a longer service life than a rifle working off a single recoil spring. This is important on a rifle that expects to see high round counts and infrequent depot-level maintenance.

Other lessons learned and improved upon from the Stoner-designed AR include the use of a steel cam-pin path and steel feedramp. The cam-pin path frequently takes a beating on ARs retrofitted with a piston system. The way Stoner designed the system, gas pressure enters the bolt carrier and pushes it away from the chamber, unlocking the bolt and pulling it and the fired case rearward. The pressure that moves the carrier rearward also simultaneously pushes the bolt forward into the receiver extension. This forward pressure ensures that the cam pin has enough clearance to rotate freely when the bolt unlocks. When we use a piston system on an AR, we remove the opposing forces from within the bolt carrier and just give it a good smack on the gas



There are two bolts that hold the barrel in place. One maintains rearward pressure, and the other tightens the receiver radially.

key to make it cycle. This results in the cam pin getting knocked rearward into the upper receiver, where it chews its own path through the aluminum.

SIG put a replaceable steel cam-pin path on the SIG MCX that doesn't wear anywhere nearly as fast as a bare aluminum upper receiver and is easily replaced should the rifle see enough rounds to wear it out. We still get to keep a version of the AR-style bolt/barrel extension combination that contains pressure so well and lets us build rifles out of aluminum, but it has steel pieces just where we need them.

The feedramp is also a steel insert. During testing, SIG discovered that steel-core ammunition chewed up the feedramp if fed a steady diet of the stuff. Steel-core bullets are widely available and sold in almost all ammunition coming out of Eastern Europe and Russia. These bullets have a thin copper jacket over a mild steel core, and they raise hell with steel targets and aluminum feedramps.

In addition to making several options on side-folding and collapsible stocks, SIG has multiple offerings for handguards, including one with a KeyMod accessory attachment system rather than rails. There are a couple of different lengths depending on which barrel we're using and whether we want to shoot with a suppressor. One handguard style is very slender and keeps the

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rifle svelte and compact. The other style allows for a suppressor to fit underneath the handguard. This gives the shooter the nice, long forend needed for field shooting conditions while still keeping as compact a package as possible, thanks to the short barrel. This setup is excellent for general work, but it can get hot during extended firing sessions.

Snake Charming After a day at the range with the SIG MCX, we believe this rifle will likely find a home with our SOF guys and also be a big hit with civilian shooters. Swapping barrels to change length and/or caliber takes just a few seconds. Removing a pivot pin allows the handguard to come off, exposing the quick-change barrel system.

Two bolts hold the barrel in place. One drives the barrel into the receiver, and the other tightens radially. Both bolts are captured so that we won't lose them. Should we get interrupted mid-barrel change and forget to tighten the retaining bolts back down, the handguard cannot be reinstalled.

The barrels are hammer forged and nitrided, offering a significant improvement in barrel life over the standard button-



BRAVO$_4$ BATTLE SIGHT

It makes handguns. It makes rifles. Last year, it introduced a new line of ammunition, and now SIG Sauer will be offering a premium prismatic battle sight in 2015. It's called the BRAVO$_4$.

This sight is pointed squarely at the Trijicon ACOG ($900 to $1,200) and the Leupold HAMR ($1,300), right in the middle of the two price points. The BRAVO$_4$ is a fixed four power advertised as having 45 percent more field of view (FOV) as compared with an ACOG and an even wider FOV than most riflescopes set on 2X.

It has more eye relief than an ACOG. The notably flat, distortion-free target image presents extreme edge-to-edge clarity by a combination of low dispersion (LD) glass and an aspherical lens design.

Though its body is large, it's made of lightweight magnesium and, including glass, weighs less than a pound. Protected by an extremely robust Deflection Armor-design, the BRAVO$_4$ features a digital illumination system with Auto-off and Wake-up for optimum operational safety and enhanced battery life.

Our sources also indicate that this won't be SIG's only entry in the tactical riflescope market. You'll just have to wait and see what it's working on next.

SIG Sauer BRAVO$_4$	
Power:	4X
Objective:	30mm
Reticle:	Horseshoe dot, illuminated
Length:	6.3 in.
Weight:	14.2 oz.
Eye Relief:	2.2 in.
MSRP:	$1,200
Manufacturer:	SIG Sauer, 603-772-2302 sigsauer.com



SIG Sauer's BRAVO$_4$ will feature a horseshoe-dot illuminated reticle. A reticle tuned for .300 BLK will follow.

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Reliability testing of both 6.75-inch- and 16-inch-barrel upper receivers in .300 BLK was performed on a select-fire lower with SIG's new suppressor attached. Function was flawless.

rifled/chrome-lined models of yore. Chrome-lined barrels inevitably have variations in thickness, and these inconsistencies cost us accuracy.

Because of the risks associated with using .300 BLK ammunition in a 5.56 barrel, SIG Sauer has slotted the bolt-carrier groups so that the 5.56 barrel cannot be assembled with the .300 BLK-marked bolt-carrier group (BCG) and vice versa. The BCG's markings are visible through the ejection port, providing an important visual indicator showing which barrel is in the rifle without requiring us to peer down the muzzle. It's hard to look professional when we do that.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	VELOCITY (FPS)	ES	SD	BEST GROUP (IN.)	AVERAGE GROUP (IN.)
Barnes 110-gr. TAC-TX	1,950	40	18	.87	1.73
Black Hills 110-gr. TTSX	1,938	106	43	1.12	2
Remington 220-gr. OTM	875	79	30	1.65	2.2
SIG 220-gr. OTM	852	46	17	1.84	2.57

The SIG MCX performed well with both supersonic and subsonic loads. All of our accuracy testing was done with a 6¾-inch barrel chambered in .300 BLK. The best group of the day came from Barnes' 110-grain TAC-TX. Editor Eric Poole managed to place five rounds of this stuff into a .87-inch group at 100 yards. The average group size, however, was 1.73 inches.

Parting Thought I've heard some question the need for quick-detach barrels and multicaliber rifles, remarking that no one is going to completely reconfigure his rifle from one day to the next, even inside SOF. That is mostly true, but the need to reconfigure a rifle from one deployment to the next is very real, and all changes have to be done at operator level.

The SIG MCX makes this scenario a reality, giving military and civilian shooters alike options like we've never had before. Thanks to this rifle's roots, we can rest easy knowing that, while it might be new, it's been thoroughly tested to the tune of tens of thousands of rounds by our nation's elite forces. G&A

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ART BY DESIGN

Benelli's new 828U over/under breaks tradition and smashes convention … beautifully.

WORDS BY SKIP KNOWLES



PHOTO: LEE THOMAS KJOS



The 828U is built in and named after the famed renaissance city of Urbino, Italy, home to the Benelli factory.

Benelli 828U	
Type:	Over/under
Gauge:	12
Chamber:	2¾ or 3 in.
Capacity:	2 rds.
Chokes:	Crio (set)
Barrel Length:	26 or 28 in.
Overall Length:	45.25 in. (28-in. barrel)
Sights:	Fiber optic, interchangeable
Length of Pull:	14.38 in., adjustable
Drop at Comb:	1.5 in., adjustable
Drop at Heel:	2.13 in., adjustable
Weight:	6.6 lbs.
Stock:	Walnut
Finish:	Anodized (black), nickel
MSRP:	$2,500 (black), $3,000 (nickel)
Manufacturer:	Benelli, 800-264-4962 benelliusa.com

A STORM BATTERED the ancient walls of the beautiful fortified city for three days during our trip to Urbino last year. We were the first group of journalists to tour the Benelli plant. Considered one of the most spectacular renaissance treasures of Europe, famous for art and design, the north-central Italian city is a well-suited home for Benelli, a company that in just 45 years has battled to take away a huge share of the shotgun market from long-dominating larger companies, many of which are centuries old.

Despite the setting, there is little that is Old World about the Benelli factory, which is crammed with cutting-edge robots, computers and engineers rather than aging craftsmen. The result is precision manufacturing with almost zero human error, exact tolerances and the ability to churn out 600 to 700 nearly perfect shotguns every day.

After hunting the green, muddy hills of that stunning region with the then-new Ethos semiauto (and happily learning that the Italian food in the factory's chow hall is better than most American restaurants), we were asked to sit down for a brainstorm session where we were let in on a big secret: Benelli was considering building its first double gun, an over/under (O/U), and wanted to know our thoughts on just what a Benelli double barrel should be like. The consensus: It should be a no-nonsense field and hunting gun with trademark Italian flare, yet absolute utility in the Benelli tradition, and it should not be overly expensive.

Fast-forward a year and a half to November 2014, and the gun was in my disbelieving hands as I stood in a rustic lodge the night before a South Dakota pheasant hunt and test event. I was incredulous, staring at it, having expected a shotgun closer in design to Benelli's sister company, Beretta's, masterful lines of over/unders but one that would please the Benelli brand lover with a few style cues and general toughness.

Like the Ethos, Benelli set out to make the 828U unlike anything else on the market. When Benelli's Tom Kaleta and Cristie Gates finally stopped teasing us journalists and handed over the guns, my sweating palms cradled a racy, balanced, lightweight gun with graceful lines swooping along the receiver. Its design cues, it would be revealed, were borrowed from the forward-swept elegance of a mallard's wings in flight, a mildly ostentatious pattern that creates striking, bold looks.

Nobody does style like the Italians, and this is a fascinating gun. The second thing I noticed, after its style, was its airy-ness. The full-size 828U 12 gauge is wonderfully light in the hand at 6.6 pounds, hoisting like a 20 gauge. Next, the gun practically falls open when you break open the action, like only an old, worn-in double gun can, and even that tension can be adjusted lighter, it turns out. This is because of the next thing that raised my eyebrows: a brightly polished steel locking plate that locks into place behind the chambers as you close the gun, forming the breech face. It is something to see.

Because this locking plate supports the cartridge base and takes all the pounding of the shell explosion (as opposed to simply the flat front face of the receiver forming the breech like every other O/U out there), the gun doesn't have to be built so tight that you need gorilla arms to break it open before it's worn in.

There's another reason it breaks so easily. You aren't cocking it when you crack it open. The 828U is cocked when you push the thumb lever to open it up, which is another reason the receiver has such a nice, slim, low profile. The forestock is just

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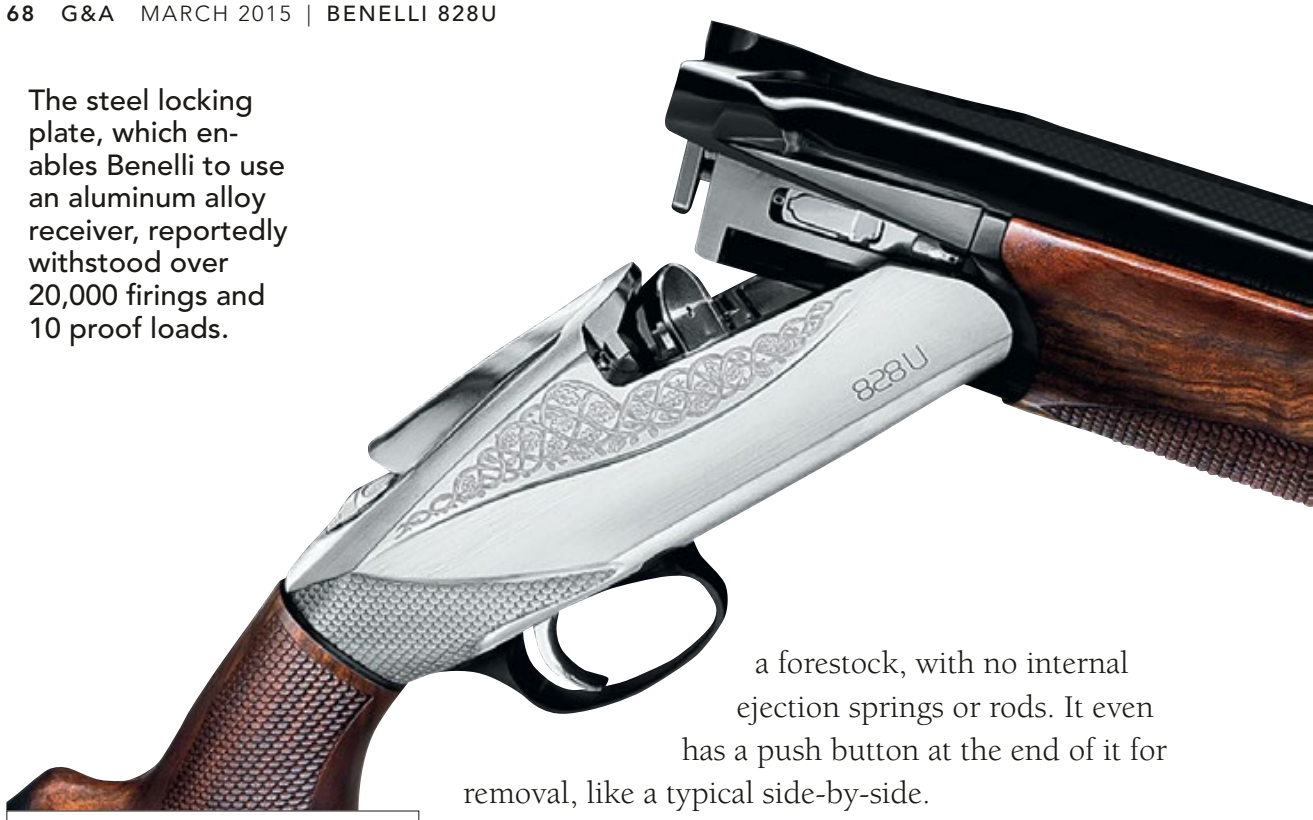
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The steel locking plate, which enables Benelli to use an aluminum alloy receiver, reportedly withstood over 20,000 firings and 10 proof loads.



a forestock, with no internal ejection springs or rods. It even has a push button at the end of it for removal, like a typical side-by-side.

Perhaps the most profound of the 828's unconventional features is that locking plate because it enables the use of many other nontraditional features, such as an aluminum alloy receiver, as well as the impulse ejectors built into the sides of the monobloc. That's because recoil is directed back to the barrel assembly as opposed to simply slamming rearward into the breech face (and your shoulder). This is achieved because the locking plate has lugs that hook into the bottom of the monobloc when the gun is closed, effectively making the locking plate (the breech face in this design) a steel-on-steel part of the monobloc.

In a conventional gun, according to designer Marco Vignaroli (the mastermind behind the Ethos and the 828U), the explosion from the shot is essentially trying to blow apart the gun, and the hinge pin is what holds it together and takes all that abuse. This is why traditional guns are tight and stiff at first before wearing in wonderfully and wearing out ultimately. After many thousands of rounds, they need to be refurbished.

Also because of the wear-in on traditional O/U's, the release lever slowly works over to one side across the years. The 828 should do none of this and, according to Benelli, never wear out, nor does it have to be built super tight with stiff hinges, cocking, safety mechanism and release-lever tolerances to endure that pounding.

Impulse ejectors work as extractors if the shell has not been fired. Once a shell is fired, the hull of the shell — not gas — pushes a small piston through a hole (visible below) in the chamber. This trips that ejector to throw the shell out.



PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

We are just getting started here. Because the recoil is directed to the barrel assembly, the gun can be built with that aluminum alloy receiver, which is one way that divine overall light weight is achieved (hinge pins are steel to ensure steel-on-steel lockup).

For that same reason (redirected recoil), there is no need for traditional metal reinforcement tangs running through the pistol grip of the stock, typically the first place a fancy gun sees wear and rust from hand sweat. This is a big deal because with no metal tangs in the stock, you can use shim systems, like any semiauto, to adjust to

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more than 40 settings for LOP and cast, eliminating the need for big-money custom-stock fitting typical of O/U's.

Energy is energy, and the recoil is still there, but it does seem less severe from this design for such a light gun. Benelli's new progressive recoil-reduction system (in the buttstock) is part of the 828U as well. I admit that this system at first raised an eyebrow, as internally it looks like intermeshed teeth of a hair comb that flex and soak up recoil. Simple can be best, and with miraculous modern polymers, it really seems to work and is as lightweight as a recoil-reduction system can get.

This all adds up to a gun that is perfectly balanced right at the hinge (go ahead; you can balance it there on your finger), protecting Benelli's heritage of between-the-hands balance spawned by all of its wonderful internal inertia-driven autoloaders.

More lightness comes from the interchangeable carbon fiber rib, which is a hint that a competition model 828 is likely in the works since you could easily slap on a raised, trap-style rib. A detachable trigger mechanism in the 828 is a similar cue, as is the safety. By simply removing a wire in that detachable trigger assembly, the auto safety (great for hunters; bad for clays) is shut off. I loved the oversize safety on the bird hunt because frigid weather meant wearing gloves.

There is a lot of brilliance here, in other words, if it all stands the test of time and that aluminum receiver survives the pounding of heavy field loads. If it all works for the long haul, what you have here is a lightweight, yet soft-kicking, affordable (at least in the world of Italian doubles) shotgun that will never wear out and has infinitely adjustable stock options in a genre of guns that generally have to be restocked for a custom fit because of the tangs. It's an extremely user-friendly gun, plenty light for smaller users and super-easy to break open, with ejectors that won't launch unfired shells into the water behind your duck blind.

A carbon fiber top sight rib combined with a lack of side ribs add to the light weight and fast handling. The fiber optic front sight can be changed.



PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

Dog Will Hunt The gun was born and bred for the field, not as a status symbol, as Tom Kaleta, VP of



Available with either an engraved nickel or clean black anodized finish, the 828U will eventually become available in additional models (including a 20 gauge).

marketing for Benelli USA reminded everyone the night before our hunt. "From the first prototype to the final design, the 828U started and finished as a hunter's shotgun. The style, weight and comfort that field and sport shooters appreciate [are] apparent the first time you pick one up," he said.

So, how'd it do?

With subzero lows; bitter, knifing winds; and highs around 10 degrees, South Dakota would prove a tough field test. After the first day, most hunters owned up to having an "I'm not sure this is a good idea" moment at dawn when it was almost too cold to hold your gun as we hiked the brush and snow. Then it soared to 10 degrees, the wind lulled, and rigorous slogging bumped up our core temps.

Great numbers of gorgeous plumed-out ringnecks flew from every field, but these super-spooky late-season birds mostly flushed far ahead of the dogs. The hunt, though, like the comfort level and shootability of that new gun in hand, improved as the day wore on. My group of five bird hunters performed a roundup in a vast field of cattails, circling and closing in. My 828U finally got a chance to speak as a whopper ditch chicken flew skyward and to the left and rolled cleanly at the shot. No birds were missed under 40 yards with the 828 in my hands, making for an easy limit. It was incredible, despite the low, hard flight of these paranoid ringnecks. There are no pen-raised birds released at Brown's Hunting Ranch near Gettysburg, South Dakota.

One shot in particular revealed how effortlessly the 828 swings. A hidden ringneck held perfectly for a double point of German Shorthairs like some old magazine cover, something wild birds rarely do, and sprang out going hard to the right. The gun leapt up as I spun to shoot and subconsciously swung through the bird's beak. At the shot, its head floated off in one direction and the body fell whole and clean to the ground, with no meat ruined. It was a little gory, but it's better to shoot too early than too late, right? When you can snap shoot with an unfamiliar gun like that, there is something right in the way it was designed.

The 828U is much easier to open than conventional new O/U shotguns because it features a clever action that is cocked by the thumb lever, not upon the opening of the action.



PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

Hiking through the snow and brush, we were all grateful to carry such a light and balanced shotgun because the wildly flushing birds ("To your left! Rooster! Rooster! Shoot! Shoot!") seldom gave



warning or held for a dog and were tough to hear flushing in the wind. The gun never misfired or failed to eject in the extreme cold.



Bitter conditions were sweetened by the flawless function and sensational handling of Benelli's new double barrel while hunting late-season pheasant in South Dakota.

Bottom Line Most of us prefer innovation to pure tradition in new guns, but the part of us that loves beautiful guns might miss a conventional metal tang running through the grip. Yet you have to recognize the brilliance that enables its absence, which also enables infinite stock adjustability. You might not be crazy about the gap between those excellent Crio barrels, but you know the lack of side rib saves money; makes the gun lighter, faster-cooling and easier to swing; and helps create that perfect dead-center balance point at the hinge, just like that carbon fiber rib. It's not gorgeous, but it adds lightness and interchangeability. Beyond those things, the gun is an absolute looker, 100 percent pure Italian, even in namesake.

It will be fun to see how it fares. Shooters love doubles for their tradition, grace and beauty less than their sheer practicality. So, are there enough shooters looking for doubles who aren't hung up on nostalgic designs? My first impression is that you are either going to love or hate this gun based on that dichotomy. Fortunately for Benelli, its brand following is among the strongest in shooting, and its name alone will drive much interest. There are plenty of shooters who have shot Super Black Eagles their entire lives, the same people who are now entering or exiting middle age and will be curious to try an exciting new product from their favorite gun company.

In any case, it's a safe bet that, just like the Ethos, anyone who takes it out and shoots it will probably love it. Benelli hasn't been around forever, but with new guns like Guns & Ammo's 2014 Shotgun of the Year, the Ethos, and now 2015's new 828U, it's pretty easy to see that they probably will be. As light as the 12-gauge 828U is, I'm especially looking forward to a model with 20-gauge barrels. Now, if Benelli would just make one with two triggers … .

PHOTO: LEE THOMAS KJOS



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As never before, Leupold's newest optic.

D-EVO

DUAL ENHANCED VIEW OPTIC

Words by SGM Kyle Lamb (Ret.) | Photos by Lukas Lamb

VERY RARELY IN THE GUN BUSINESS does anything truly new come along. There are rebuilds and advancements made in guns and optics that enhance the user's experience, making shooting more accurate, faster, quieter … you get the picture. But when have you seen something that hasn't ever been done before? Enter Leupold's off-the-chart-cool new optic, the D-EVO (Dual Enhanced View Optic). When we hear "D-EVO," most people my age think of a red flowerpot on a guy's head as he sings, "Whip it; whip it good."

The D-EVO is actually somewhat hard to describe; it is much easier to see the application when it's mounted on a flattop carbine and you have that "holy cow" moment. The D-EVO allows the shooter to simultaneously see a six-power image and the red dot optic of your choice. As you look through your red dot, whether it be Leupold's LCO, an EOTech hollowgraphic sight or an Aimpoint, you can glance down and see a six-power image. The key to this new design is the angled viewer at the rear of the sight. This allows you to see without flipping magnifiers in and out or up and over. You simply move your eye, not your head, to see the magnified image.

There is a definite advantage with the D-EVO over standard magnifiers. You don't have to do anything to make it available for shooting. Just look through your red dot to get in the general vicinity of the target, then glance down to the D-EVO for a magnified image, align with the target, and squeeze the trigger.

If you haven't figured it out, I am already sold on this piece of kit. Let me slow down a little and start at the beginning.

How It Came to Be One of the mad scientists at Leupold's skunk works, Quint Crispin, had an idea to make a sideways periscope to look around the attached primary optic. The difficulty came with making an eyepiece that was angled but still easily viewable. As he sat at his desk one day messing with a six-power scope and a couple of mirrors from a spotting scope, the idea hit him. As a dedicated hunter, he had always wanted a scope that would be on the power you needed immediately. With that idea in mind, he and the rest of the team printed models on a 3D printer, lenses and reticles were installed, and the 3D models were shot to see if this was a valid idea. Everyone who checked it out immediately saw the great potential for a radical new scope.

With the help of the entire team at Leupold, Quint and several others quickly saw the validity of his idea, and everyone pitched in to help. As Quint says, "I am very fortunate to work at Leupold. If I were anywhere else, this idea would never have gotten off the ground. We have optical scientists, engineers, machinists



With the objective lens offset, the D-EVO looks around your red dot. It looks crazy but works great.

and competitive shooters all under one roof. When I needed input from anyone, I could just walk to their desk and ask."

Another problem would be encountered with the scope not being aligned directly over the bore. The engineers found the right angle for the eyepiece and simply added a curved reticle to deal with the side offset of the front lens.

The issue that was being corrected dealt with the need for additional movements to go from red dot to magnified optic. With the D-EVO, a quick glance down makes you ready to shoot the six power. The other issue with many of the magnifiers for red dots is the zero change. As you flip the optic into place, you perceive the dot differently than you would without extra power. I have had as much as 4 MOA of shift when going from nothing to three or four power. Some folks don't seem to have this problem, but many in the classes we teach at Viking Tactics constantly battle with the changes. With the D-EVO, this change is negated by the fact that you don't look through the same optic; you now have two independent devices.

With the six-power D-EVO's eyepiece at this nonstandard angle, it's difficult to use this optic in a stand-alone setup. In reality, I like the fact that the red dot guides you to your target with the D-EVO, then takes over to allow for extended-range accuracy. I use the red dot to point almost as though I am pointing with my finger. This makes getting on target extremely quick. Now back to the curved reticle.

Since the objective lens is offset 1.8 inches to the right, you must compensate for this difference. Instead of working to get a parallel zero, a special reticle was



designed that requires a 200-meter zero. Once the zero is squared away at 200, you are able to hold on the hash marks to easily make hits out to 600 meters. If the reticle were not curved, you would be off by 3.6 inches at 600 meters. It's not that this would affect most of us, but the reticle takes away any equipment performance issues that you had planned on using as an excuse. Unlike other optics that allow a near and far zero, this optic must be zeroed at 200 meters. If you were to zero at 50 meters, your windage would be off significantly at extended ranges.



Double the fun: Leupold's new D-EVO and LCO. You can see the lower image on six power, and the top image is the red dot through the LCO. Situation dependent, no power or 6X.

Leupold D-EVO	
Power:	1X (red dot), 6X (magnifier)
Objective:	20mm
Length:	4.6 in.
Width:	3.3 in.
Height:	2 in.
Weight:	13.8 oz.
Eye Relief:	3.4 in.
Elevation Adj.:	50 MOA (14.5 mil)
Windage Adj.:	50 MOA (14.5 mil)
MSRP:	$1,500
Manufacturer:	Leupold, 800-538-7653 leupold.com

This optic really shines when attached to your carbine. It has a built-in Picatinny rail mount with Leupold's standard half-inch nut, which allows for proper torqueing. With Leupold's new Light Collimating Optic (LCO) in place, the D-EVO can easily fit on the top rail of a standard 5.56/.223 carbine without extending over the front edge of the upper receiver. I have also used the D-EVO with an EOTech XPS and an Aimpoint T-1 with no issues.

As far as six-power scopes go, this device is pretty light. Weighing 13.8 ounces, the D-EVO is not going to cause you to throw out your back. If you look at the fact that you now have a six-power scope with a mount and a red dot, the little extra weight isn't as hard to swallow. Many stand-alone low-powered scopes when coupled with their mounts easily outweigh the red dot/D-EVO combo.

I have shot this optic extensively on several 5.56mm carbines as well as a Smith & Wesson M&P10 7.62/.308 rifle. My initial impression was that it was an interesting idea, but it might be difficult to use. If you don't have the optic on a rifle, it is really hard to see the significance of its capabilities. Once the optic was mounted, it became very intuitive. The only issue I have encountered thus far has been with length of pull. If the optic isn't the correct distance from your eye, you may have difficulty getting the correct image. To correct for this, I simply adjusted my stock to get the desired view, which for me was in the all-the-way-out position for the 5.56 carbine and one click in on the 7.62 rifle. If you have the D-EVO mounted to the rear slot of the carbine, you should be in fine shape; your standard stock-to-cheekweld will get you right in there.

Adjustments At the request of specialized military units, the D-EVO's windage and elevation adjustments are .1 mil. This works out to roughly one-third MOA per click for those of you who are not savvy with mils. The adjustment screws are not covered but require the use of a screwdriver or cartridge case head for adjustment. I really like the fact that no special tools are required when using the D-EVO.

In the Field You have the speed of your already attached red dot right up until you need to make a precision shot or shoot at extended range and glance down, making the transition to the

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D-EVO. As I shot the D-EVO more and more, I realized I was looking at both images at the same time. I was using the red dot as a guide, then confirming with the powered scope to get fast, easy hits. I have shot the D-EVO at extended ranges, but most of my shooting has been from 300 meters and closer. The sweet spot for this sight is definitely 300 yards. This is just far enough that you have to work pretty hard to see the red dot on a human-size target, but it's easily seen through the 6X magnification of the D-EVO. I like the fact that having to take a CQB-distance shot is a breeze and can be followed up immediately with accurate fire from a magnified optic. It isn't one or the other; it's both at the same time.

I can think of many times when I wanted to use a red dot for building clearing but needed an optic when in a security position on the roof of a Third World building. The best choices in the past were a low-powered scope that could be cranked from 1X to 6X after getting into position. With the D-EVO, this isn't necessary since it is readily accessible without moving anything but your eye. If you normally run a military-grade laser device on the 12 o'clock rail of your carbine, the D-EVO will still work perfectly.

It Takes Time This isn't an optic that you immediately figure out; it does take time. I had to shoot this device for a couple of sessions to really get comfortable with the idea. The key is not moving your head, just glancing down at the six-power image and making the shot. I have been fortunate to see the entire evolution of this scope, and I can't wait to get into the woods and use it in a hunting environment. Quint has already used it for coyotes, but I am itching to strap it to a .308 AR and use it for big game. I would prefer to use it as a soldier hunting terrorists in the Middle East, but since I am retired, I guess I will have to leave that up to my buddies who are still doing the deed. I am sure they'd quickly find a use for this setup.

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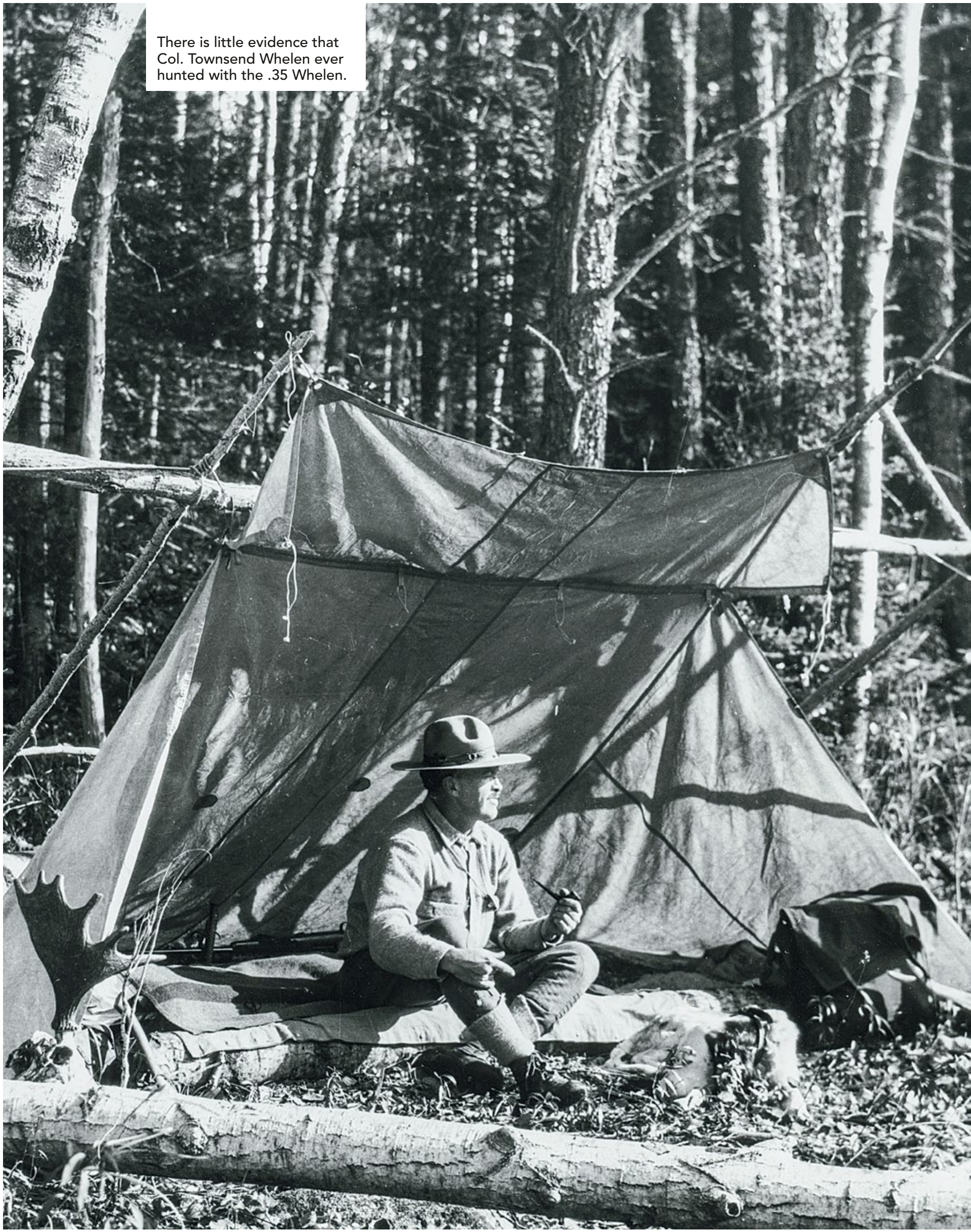
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There is little evidence that Col. Townsend Whelen ever hunted with the .35 Whelen.







"Hey, Mister Rifleman ... "

The .35 Whelen Story

WORDS BY LAYNE SIMPSON

REMINGTON forever legitimized the .35 Whelen when it began loading it in 1988. Eventually, Big Green would offer it in the Model 700 as well as its slide-action and semiautomatic rifles. Prior to that, however, the .35 was one of our most popular wildcats. For about as long as it has been around, its origin has been debated. Some are convinced it was James V. Howe who created it, and others argue with equal fervor that it was Col. Townsend Whelen. The argument rages on despite the fact that Whelen long ago settled it in two of his books. In the .35 Whelen section of "Why Not Load Your Own?" (1957), he writes, "This cartridge was developed by James V. Howe in 1922 and named for the writer."



Page 271 of "The Hunting Rifle," which was published during the early 1940s, reads in part, "In 1922, Mr. James V. Howe and the writer developed the .400 Whelen cartridge. This cartridge was constructed by taking the .30-'06 case before it had been necked at all and necking it down to .40 caliber. About the time we completed development of this cartridge, I went on a long hunting trip in the Northwest, and when I returned, Mr. Howe showed me another cartridge that he had developed. The .30-'06 case was necked to .35 caliber to use existing .35-caliber bullets. Mr. Howe asked my permission to call this cartridge the .35 Whelen, but he alone deserves credit for its development."

Whelen was known for his modesty, but he was equally renowned for his painstakingly accurate reporting. Had he been involved in the creation of the cartridge, he would have written so.

I have two different printings of Whelen's "The Hunting Rifle." Almost two pages of one are devoted to the .35 Whelen, but in the later printing, the cartridge is hardly mentioned. The earlier book also has a photo of the .35 Whelen alongside a couple of other wildcats: the .276 Dubiel Magnum and the .22-3000 Lovell. That photo is absent in the later book.

As a Colonel in the U.S. Army, Whelen was commanding officer of Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia where James V. Howe was in charge of the machine shop tool room. In addition to his gunsmithing skills, Howe was an accomplished stockmaker. After leaving Frankford in 1923, he got together with Seymour Griffin and formed Griffin & Howe, a shop that became widely known for building fine custom rifles. The partnership did not work out, and after about six months, Howe moved on to Hoffman Arms Company in Cleveland, Ohio, where he stayed for a long time.

Even though Col. Whelen staked no claim to the .35 Whelen, we still owe him partial credit for its existence. During the 1920s, American Leslie Simpson was considered to be an authority on hunting the African continent. Among other things, he, along with novelist Steward Edward White and a couple of oth-



For the past 25 years, this custom rifle on a Whitworth Model 98 Mauser square-bridge action has been the author's favorite in .35 Whelen. Its 22-inch Apex barrel was made by the late Sam May, and its 1:12-inch twist handles bullets as long as the 310-grain Woodleigh. Butch Searcy did the barreled action, and it was stocked by E.C. Bishop & Son of Warsaw, Missouri.



The origin of the .35 Whelen has long been debated despite the fact that in two of his books, Colonel Whelen named James V. Howe as its developer.

ers, was said to have taken more than 50 lions during a control shoot lasting three weeks. Simpson and Whelen became friends, and during one of their conversations, Simpson mentioned using the .35 Winchester and finding it lacking. What was needed for taking thin-skinned African game, including lions, was a cartridge of the same caliber but capable of pushing along a 250-grain bullet at 2,500 to 2,600 feet-per-second. Whelen passed the idea on to James Howe, who came up with two cartridges, one of which was the .35 Whelen while he was at Frankford Arsenal. After moving on to Griffin & Howe, Howe followed up with the .350 G&H Magnum, and it was loaded by Western Cartridge Company.

Whelen had several favorites, but reading his books, I find very little evidence of the .35-caliber cartridge bearing his name being one of them. In fact, I'm not sure he ever actually hunted with it. The book "Mister Rifleman," published by Petersen Publishing Company after Whelen's death in 1961, has a chapter titled "A Rifleman's Battery." It's filled with two-page-spread photos of about 30 rifles owned by Whelen along with comments on each written by him. The only rifle in the group in .35 Whelen was built on a 1903 Springfield action by James Howe in 1922 and originally had a Niedner barrel in .400 Whelen. Due to very little shoulder on its case for headspacing, the .400 was a troublesome cartridge to reload and shoot, yet Whelen did not get around to having the rifle rebarreled to .35 Whelen until around 1950, long after he did most of his hunting. His reloading manual came out seven years later, and he may have needed a rifle in .35 Whelen for developing the loads published in it.

Col. Whelen was a practical man, and my guess is that he had very little use for the .35 simply because the game he successfully hunted was easily taken with cartridges of smaller calibers and less recoil. His 40-year Army career began not long after the .30-40 Krag was adopted, and both became favorites in the hunting fields. He later became equally fond of the .30-'06, 7x57mm Mauser and .257 Roberts, but the .270 Winchester that accounted for his best moose seemed to be his favorite. There were others in his life, both factory and wildcats, with the .243 Winchester and .308 Winchester among the last he wrote up while on the technical staff of Guns & Ammo.

Someone who did hunt a great deal with the .35 Whelen was Elmer Keith. Before using it, he used a custom Springfield in .400 Whelen given to him by James Howe in 1925. Like Whelen, he eventually had his rifle rebarreled to .35 Whelen and used it to take what he described as a record-book brown bear during his first hunt in Alaska in 1937. Keith took the bruin with a 275-grain bullet made by Western Tool & Copper Co., his favorite for all-around use. He loaded 57 grains of IMR 4064, but that powder in his day was a bit slower in burn rate than today's version, since 52 grains is now considered maximum with a bullet of that weight. Elmer speculated that the 300-grain roundnose made by Fred Barnes might be a better choice when hunting elk in heavy timber, but I don't believe he actually got around to trying it.

In notes written about his .35-caliber Griffin & Howe Springfield, Whelen recommended two loads for it with IMR 4350. One was 61 grains behind a 275-grain roundnose bullet made at

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Of the various factory-loaded cartridges of .35 caliber introduced through the years, the .35 Whelen and .35 Remington went on to become the most popular. Left to right: .35 Whelen, .35 Remington, .358 Winchester, .350 Rem. Mag., .35 Winchester, .35 Newton, .350 G&H Mag., .358 Norma Mag.

the time by Joyce Hornady. Velocity was 2,375 fps. The other was 60 grains with the Barnes 300-grain bullet for 2,350 fps. He must have been using special brass because I am unable to get that much IMR 4350 into factory .35 Whelen cases or those formed from various brands of .30-'06 brass and still have enough space left to seat bullets at the overall cartridge lengths required by the magazines of various bolt-action rifles. The heaviest charges I can squeeze behind 275- and 300-grain bullets are 59 and 53 grains, respectively, for velocities of 2,219 and 2,059 fps.

Reloder 15 has become *the* powder for .35 Whelen handloads, not only for me but for several other hunters I know who use the cartridge. Clean-burning, it delivers top velocities with all bullet weights, accuracy is usually very good, and it meters through powder measures with minimum charge-to-charge variation. Maximum charges with all bullets weighing from 180 to 210 grains are either 100 percent density or close enough to it. If I were to pick a second favorite, it would be Vihtavuori N-140. Others with similar burn rates include Accurate 2520, Varget, W748 and IMR 4064. Various reloading manuals have data for all of them.

Today's bullets are much better than in Elmer Keith's time, and lighter weights than those used by him are capable of taking any game most would want to hunt with the .35 Whelen. For those who wish to turn back the calendar to the good old days, a few heavyweights are available. Loading the heavier bullets also puts the .35 Whelen on a more equal footing with the 9.3x62mm Mauser. Woodleigh offers a 275-grain Weldcore, and from Swift we have a 280-grain A-Frame. Both are a bit long for the 1:16-inch twist of Remington rifles and usually require 1:14 or quicker. The Woodleigh 310-grain roundnose is available in both expanding and solid styles; both require a 1:12 twist. I have not tried the 275-grain Lion Load bullet from A-Square, but since it is of roundnose form, it should work in a 1:16 twist. I believe Savage rifles have a 1:12 twist, but I'm not sure about Browning, Rugers, Winchesters and others.

Unprimed cases are available from Nosler, Hornady, Remington and Norma USA, but necking up .30-'06 cases as in the old



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A FEW GOOD .35 WHELEN LOADS

LOAD	COL* (IN.)	POWDER (TYPE)	POWDER (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	ACCURACY (IN.)
180-gr. Barnes TTSX/FB	3.240	RL-15	60	2,832	1.12
200-gr. Barnes TSX/FB	3.145	RL-15	58	2,761	1.41
225-gr. Barnes TSX/FB	3.270	RL-15	57	2,663	1.38
225-gr. Sierra SBT	3.250	V-N140	57	2,675	1.15
250-gr. Speer Grand Slam	3.280	V-N140	55	2,438	1.35
250-gr. Swift A-Frame	3.220	RL-15	55	2,514	1.42
275-gr. Woodleigh WC	3.250	RL-15	54	2,352	1.44
280-gr. Swift A-Frame	3.230	RL-15	54	2,383	1.61
300-gr. Barnes RN**	3.275	RL-15	53	2,255	1.74
310-gr. Woodleigh WC	3.280	RL-15	52	2,236	.95
310-gr. Woodleigh WC	3.280	W748	53	2,271	1.18
200-gr. InterLock SP	3.120	Horn. Factory Load	n/a	2,962	1.39
200-gr. Core-Lokt PSP	3.155	Rem. Factory Load	n/a	2,639	1.55
225-gr. TB Bear Claw	3.320	Fed. Factory Load	n/a	2,760	1.30
250-gr. PSP	3.295	Rem. Factory Load	n/a	2,386	1.74

NOTES: Custom '98 Mauser, 22-in. barrel, Redfield 1-4X. *Cartridge overall length. **No longer available. Powder charges are maximum and should be reduced by 10 percent for starting loads. Hornady cases and Federal GM205M primers were used. Accuracy shown for each load represents an average of three three-shot groups fired at 100 yards. Velocity is an average of nine rounds clocked 12 feet from the muzzle of the 22-inch Apex barrel.



Remington Express Core-Lokt .35 Whelen, 200 gr. $37

PHOTO: MICHAEL ANSCHUETZ

days remains an option. A tapered expander button in most .35 Whelen full-length resizing dies makes doing so easy. Applying a light coat of wax-type resizing lube (available from Hornady and Redding) to the mouth of each case makes the job go smoothly. Case loss should be zero if new brass is used.

Remington continues to offer two .35 Whelen loads: 200-grain Core-Lokt and 250-grain soft-nose, the latter a Hornady bullet. Federal Premium loaded with the 225-grain Trophy Bonded Bear Claw is a good choice when sticking with one load for everything from mice to moose. Nosler ammunition loaded with 225- and 250-grain Partition bullets has a following, and Winchester loads the cartridge as well.

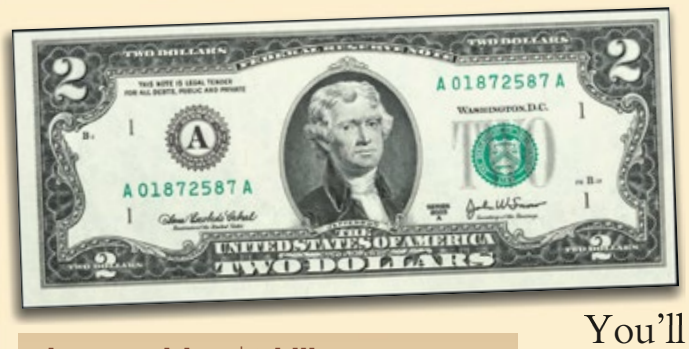
Hornady Superformance with a 200-grain softpoint is the fastest factory load available. I wondered whether the 2,920-fps velocity printed on its box was a misprint, but skepticism turned





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Col. Whelen, dean of American riflemen, shooting his 7mm rifle on assignment for accuracy and trajectory.

to amazement when my Oehler Model 33 indicated an average of 2,962 fps from the 22-inch barrel of my Mauser. That's more than 100 fps faster than maximum handloads with 180-grain bullets in that rifle. It should be devastating on deer. A second load with the 225-grain GMX at 2,800 fps or so would be equally effective on elk and other large game.

An Australian friend tells me the semiautomatic Remington 7600 in .35 Whelen is a favorite in his country among those who hunt sambar deer. Often taken at fairly close range in the woodlands, they are not quite as big as our Rocky Mountain elk but every bit as tough. I have a Model 7600 in that caliber, and it is as accurate as most bolt-action rifles.

I have also owned a couple of Model 700s in this caliber, but my favorite is a custom rifle built about 25 years ago by Butch Searcy, who is now better known for building fine double rifles. He began the project by installing one of Sam May's Apex barrels on a Whitworth '98 Mauser square-bridge action. The barrel is 22 inches long, and since the Barnes 275- and 300-grain bullets were available back then, I specified a rifling twist rate of 1:12 inches. Butch also machined a quarter rib for the barrel, installed a banded ramp sight up front and modified the bolt shroud for a Model 70-style safety. The barreled action was stocked by E.C. Bishop & Son custom shop in Warsaw, Missouri. The only scope it has ever worn is a Redfield 1-4X variable from the 1960s. It is held in place by quick-detach rings available at the time from Kimber of Oregon. Weight with scope is 8½ pounds. It is the most consistently accurate rifle in .35 Whelen I have ever owned and quite comfortable to shoot.

Down through the decades, a number of .35-caliber cartridges have been introduced, but not a single one has managed to win



Col. Whelen at Winchester's Nilo Farms. This photo, taken February 1961, is thought to be his last. He passed away 10 months later, on December 23, 1961, at age 84.

the hearts of America's hunters. They range from oldies such as the .35 Remington, .35 Winchester, .35 Whelen, .35 Newton and .350 Griffin & Howe Magnum to newer numbers such as the .358 Winchester, .356 Winchester, .350 Remington Magnum and .358 Norma Magnum. The .35 Remington was once quite popular among hunters in the east. It is the chambering I chose for my very first store-bought deer rifle and was used to take my first black bear. Sad to say, very few Marlin 336s in that caliber are sold these days. The .35 Whelen has yet to win a popularity contest among hunters and probably never will, but the fact that it has been in use for more than 90 years is proof of its ability to shrug off the challenges of more modern cartridges. It may eventually be the only cartridge of its caliber we have left. G&A

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Kimber Adirondack

LIGHT & IMPERVIOUS



IN HIS BOOK "Wilderness Hunting and Wildcraft," Col. Townsend Whelen wrote, "A man will travel farther, hunt over more country, have a better chance of coming on game, and be in better condition when he does if his weapon is light." For those who hunt on their hind legs as opposed to waiting out in a weatherproof blind, truer words were never written. As trendy as limiting rifle weight has become, few have mastered the art. Kimber's new Adirondack comes close.

It's difficult to find the words that effectively describe just how light this rifle is. The Adirondack might be the nimblest production bolt-action rifle on the market. Kimber shaved weight without mass skeletonization of parts or skimping on the foundation that makes a rifle a rifle. The carbon/Kevlar fiber stock, with its gummy-feeling Optifade Forest camo covering, is full size. It has a 13.63-inch length of pull, and that includes a 1-inch Pachmayr Decelerator rubber recoil pad. The stock, with the triggerguard, weighs only 24.8 ounces. The action is stainless steel, and so is the 18-inch, pencil-thin barrel. At the muzzle, the barrel is only .58 inch in diameter. Screw the barreled action and stock together with the two guard screws, and total rifle weight is 4 pounds, 10 ounces.

It's interesting that the muzzle on the Adirondack has been threaded and comes with a thread protector. Kimber says this is for a suppressor or muzzlebrake. Considering that the Adirondack is chambered for mild-mannered cartridges such as the 7mm-08 Remington and .308 Winchester, very few will have a need for a muzzlebrake. Additionally, with the slow-twist barrel, the suppressor would only be suitable for supersonic ammo. That does not mean it's a bad idea, but admittedly a suppressor would drastically change the handling qualities and weight of this svelte little rifle. Ironically, even with the added weight of a can, the Adirondack would still be lighter than many sporting rifles.

The rifle, or carbine as it is, is built on Kimber's proven 84M action. This is a two-lug bolt action that operates similarly to the controlled-round-feed (CRF) Mauser 98. However, there is a difference. With a true and properly tuned CRF action, ammunition can only be fed to the chamber through the magazine box. If you place a cartridge on top of the magazine follower and attempt to close the bolt, it will not go completely into battery because the cartridge rim cannot slip behind the large claw extractor. Kimber has engineered the 84M action so it can feed reliably from the magazine box or from on top of it.

The benefits of a CRF action are more imagined than real, but if you like this imaginary assurance, the 84M action used on the Adirondack is arguably one of the best. Kimber wisely engineered the action so that the ejector is positioned slightly in front of the rim of the cartridge in the magazine box. This limits the possibility of a short-stroke jam. Still, short stroking can produce a double feed because the bottom of the bolt face, by dragging on the rim of the top cartridge in the magazine box, can push it forward. However, the reality is that the opportunity for this is so narrow, you'll almost have to purposely engineer the condition to make it

Kimber Adirondack	
Type:	Bolt action
Caliber:	7mm-08 Rem., .308 Win. (tested)
Capacity:	4 rds.
Barrel:	18 in., 1:12-in. twist
Overall Length:	37.5 in.
Weight:	4 lbs., 10 oz.
Stock:	Kevlar/carbon fiber w/pillar and glass bedding
Finish:	Optifade Forest
Sights:	None (scope not included)
MSRP:	$1,768
Manufacturer:	Kimber, 888-243-4522 kimberamerica.com

Zeiss Conquest HD5	
Power:	3-15X
Objective:	42mm
Tube Diameter:	1 in.
Focal Plane:	Second
Focus:	Fixed
Zero Stop:	No
Reticles:	Rapid-Z 600, Rapid-Z 800, Plex
Length:	13.8 in.
Weight:	1 lb., 2.4 oz.
Eye Relief:	3.54 in.
MSRP:	$1,050
Manufacturer:	Zeiss, zeiss.com/sports-optics (available direct from Kimber, 888-243-4522, kimberamerica.com)



PHOTOS: ALFREDO RICO

a reality. The 84M is a very reliable action. It has a three-position safety, a magazine that holds four cartridges and a single-stage trigger that breaks with an almost unperceivable amount of creep at 4 pounds on the nose.

The barreled action is pillar/glass bedded to the sleek stock, and the barrel is free floated past the primary taper, just forward of the action. The only skeletonizing, if you want to call it that, is an almost half-inch hole drilled in the bolt-handle knob and the deep, spiral fluting of the bolt. Overall fit is exceptional in every area, and the brushed stainless finish on the action and barrel contrasts nicely with the digitalized camouflage coating on the stock. However, it seems that if camouflage were the goal, another pattern might make more sense.

The 84M action is drilled and tapped for scope mounts, and







Kimber uses the Mauser-type claw extractor, arguably the best bolt design ever conceived.

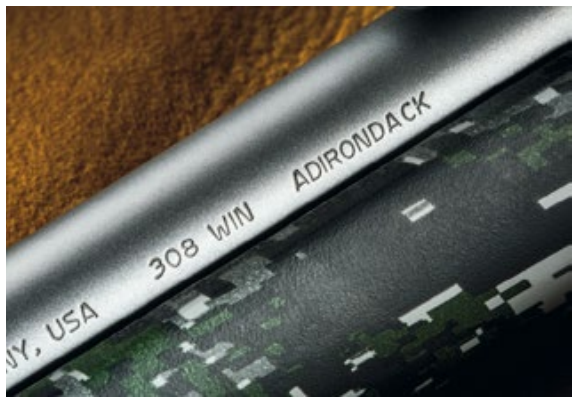


Kimber threads its stainless barrels for shooters who want to attach a muzzle-brake or suppressor.

the rifle does not come with open sights. Numerous mounting options exist, but we'd strongly suggest those available from Kimber. First are the front-dovetail, rear-windage-adjustment, Redfield-style Kimber bases available in stainless or blue. Second are the all-steel, vertically split Talley rings, which, many argue, are the most rugged scope rings on the planet. Last, there are the aluminum Talley one-piece rings. Melvin Forbes of Ultra Light Arms engineered these rings about 30 years ago. Forbes sold Talley the design, and the company has reengineered them to fit many actions. They weigh only 2½ ounces and are unworldly rugged, and Kimber offers them in blue or Optifade to match the Adirondack's stock.

The test rifle came with Talley one-piece rings in an Optifade Forest finish. The rifle was also equipped with a Zeiss Conquest HD5 3-15x42mm riflescope, dipped in camo to match the rings and stock. Kimber sells this scope and a 2-10x42mm option directly through its website with your choice of a Plex or Rapid-Z 600 or 800 reticle. Together, the rifle and scope were visually appealing even though the scope seemed a bit large on the carbine.

As an aside, these Zeiss products are excellent riflescopes and priced according-



G&A staff tested the Adirondack in what we expect to be Kimber's most popular caliber in this model: the .308 Win.



Weight is saved everywhere to keep the Adirondack under 5 pounds, including its deeply bored-out bolt handle.

ly. At almost 15 inches long, the 3-15X is still moderately light at only 17.6 ounces, which is a consideration if a light rifle is your goal. The glass surfaces have the Zeiss LotuTec coating, which helps shed moisture and resist scratches. There is a fast-focus eyepiece and a side parallax adjustment. It's waterproof, has a 75x50-MOA square adjustment range and comes with Zeiss' five-year no-fault warranty.

Five loads were tested from a sandbag rest at 100 yards, and five five-shot groups were fired with each load. Though this has become the de facto standard for rifle accuracy testing, we were anticipating that with the thin barrel, shots might string as the rifle heated up. They did not. The average group size for all 25 groups was less than 2 inches, and the most accurate tested was the Remington Managed Recoil load, which was a pleasure to shoot. None of the loads were seriously uncomfortable from the bench even though total rifle weight, with rings and scope, was right at 6 pounds. From field positions, the rifle was pleasant with all boxes of ammo, and with a hunting rifle, field-position shooting matters most.

One criticism of light hunting rifles is that they're harder to shoot offhand. The reality is that the absence of weight is







With the three-position Model 70-type safety lever flipped to the right, a red dot indicates that the rifle can be fired.

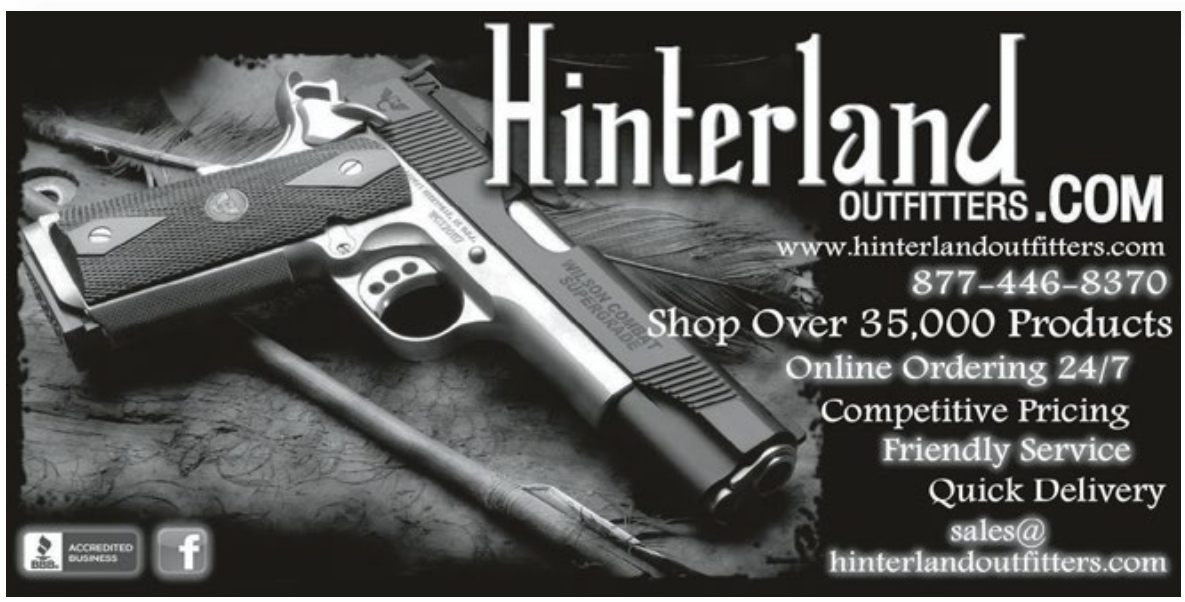


No detachable box magazine or hinged floorplate here. Loaded through an open bolt, the Adirondack can hold four rounds.

not the problem; improper balance is the culprit. Many light rifles are not balanced correctly for offhand shooting. If a rifle is butt-heavy, it's swift to handle and feels lighter than it is (think back to a 94-type lever action). If a rifle is muzzle-heavy, like an old Kentucky rifle, it's easier to hang on target but slower to get there. Ideally, a rifle for field use should balance between your hands, about at the front action screw. A rifle so balanced will provide the perfect equilibrium between fast handling and target steadiness. It will come to shoulder quickly, and you will be able to hold it on target steadily enough to trigger an accurate shot, regardless of weight. Without a scope, the Kimber Adirondack balances about an inch behind the front action screw. With the Zeiss Conquest scope installed, the balance point was about the same, making the rifle roughly a half-bubble off plumb as far as perfect balance is concerned.

Still, it was easy enough to keep shots inside the vital zone of a deer target out to 150 yards from the standing offhand position. Based on its balance, the rifle was very quick to get in action. If you're a still hunter, stalker, ridge runner or wilderness hunter, you'll want a rifle you can pack all day and that will find your shoulder in an instant. Things can happen fast when you hunt on hind legs.







PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VEL. (FPS)	SD	ACC. (IN.)
Rem. Core-Lokt MR	125	2,339	51	1.25
Federal Fusion	150	2,719	5	2.20
Nosler Ballistic Tip	165	2,581	22	2.06
Fed. Trophy Copper	165	2,526	5	1.36
Rem. BTHP Match	168	2,526	30	2.16

Notes: Velocity (Vel.) and standard velocity deviation (SD) were established by firing 10 shots over a Shooting Chrony positioned 10 feet from the muzzle. Average accuracy (Acc.) was obtained by firing five five-shot groups with each load from a sandbag rest at 100 yards using the Zeiss scope with magnification set at 15X.

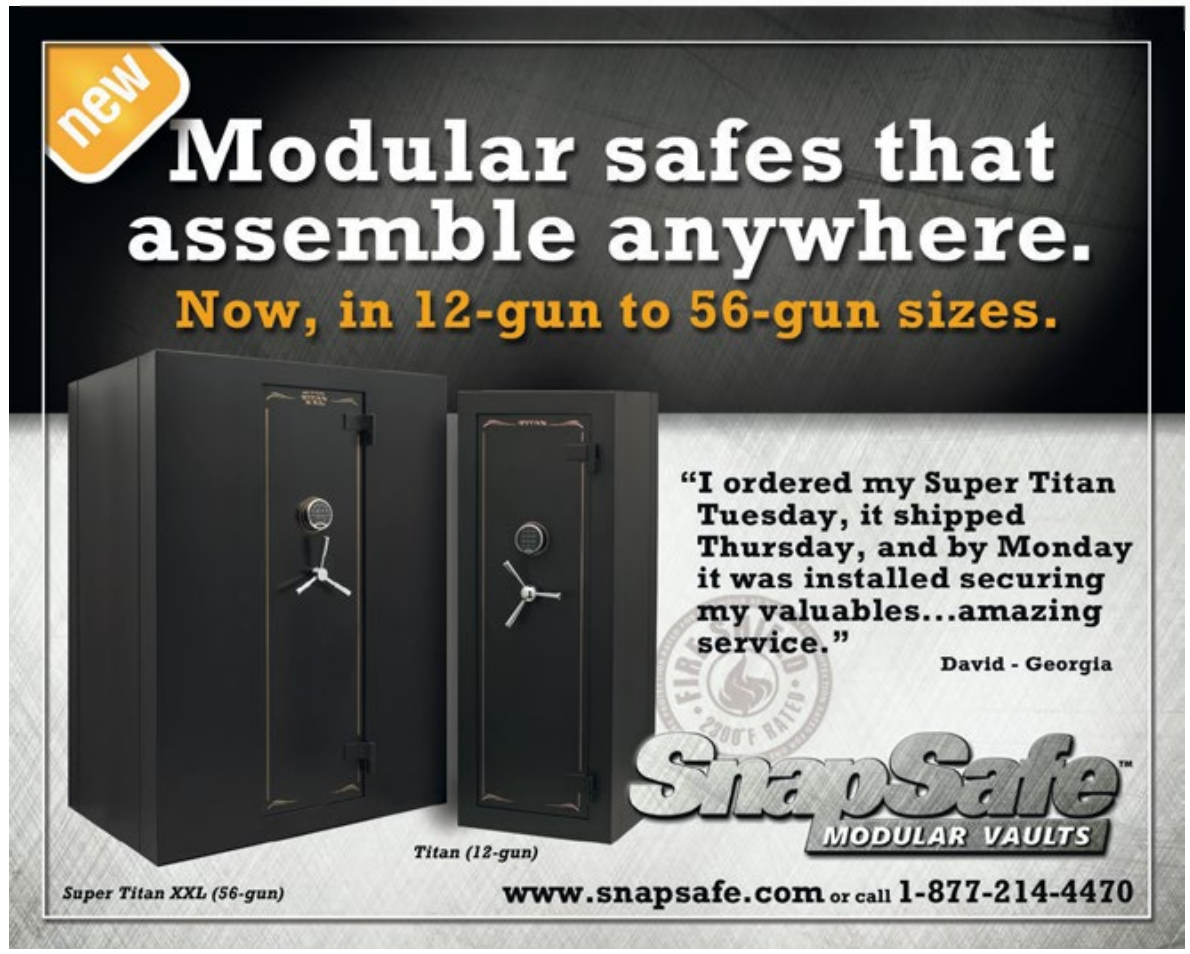
The Kimber Adirondack is put together very well. We've tested and hunted with other Kimber 84Ms over the years, and, like those, the Adirondack was a bit finicky in choosing a load it liked to shoot. However, just like those other Kimbers, with a little looking, an accurate load could always be found. Two of the five loads tested in the Adirondack delivered better than 1½-MOA five-shot precision. The trigger is good, the action is well engineered and smooth to operate, and, if you like that modernized camo look, your eyes will fall in lust.

If we were decision makers at Kimber, G&A would change two things. We'd opt for a 20-inch barrel, which would still keep the rifle compact but would move the balance point slightly forward. We would also work with Zeiss to offer its more affordable, more compact and lighter 2-7x32mm Terra 3 riflescope with the Optifade camo. In our minds, that scope would be a much better fit to the Adirondack, a quick-handling, lissome carbine.

Would Townsend Whelen have liked it? We can only speculate, but during his lifetime he never saw a rifle like this. We don't think the old boy would've minded packing it into the wilderness, and that's where this rifle belongs. G&A







Ruger Redhawk



THE CLASSIC DOUBLE-ACTION BIGBORE IS BACK

FANS OF THE .44 REMINGTON MAGNUM owe a debt to Elmer Keith. Keith was a cigar-smoking, Stetson-wearing westerner who first wrote the "Gun Notes" column for this magazine. He was a proponent of bigbore sixguns and liked to load the antique .44 Special with lots of gunpowder. Keith convinced Remington and Smith & Wesson to collaborate, and in 1956 the .44 Magnum and the S&W Model 29 were born. Twenty-four years later, Ruger introduced the Redhawk double-action revolver, and it would come to be regarded as one of the strongest-built .44 Magnum sixguns you could buy.

For the next 32 years, the Redhawk was a popular carriage for Keith's creation, but in 2012 production abruptly ceased. According to Kurt Hindle, product manager at Ruger, "Redhawk production was stopped in order to reprocess it so that it could be run on the same line as the Super Redhawk. Some time back, we did a reprocessing of the Super Redhawk, and it became much easier to make, but it clearly showed how much work the Redhawk needed in order to consistently deliver product to our customers." Some consumers feared that the Redhawk was gone forever, but in late 2013 production resumed.

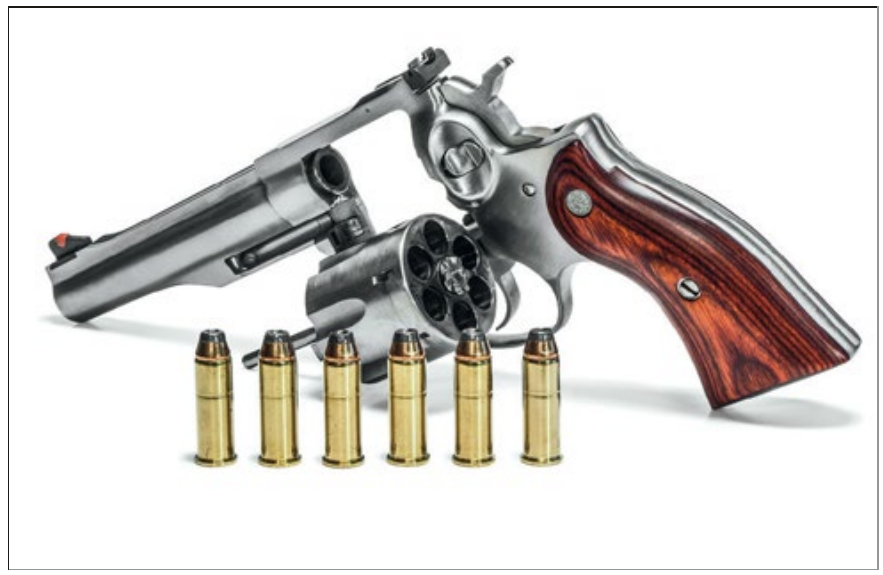
Hindle said, "The new version is nearly identical to the original. The Redhawk always had a very good trigger pull, and that was maintained. The biggest differences are that they are more consistent gun to gun and that we are capable of making them every day without missing a beat in making Super Redhawks. Right now, we offer five Redhawks: four in .44 Magnum and one in .45 Colt."

The Redhawk is all stainless steel. Available barrel lengths are 4.2, 5½ and 7½ inches with weights ranging from 46 to 54 ounces. The cylinder measures 1.8 inches in diameter, and the frame is constructed without sideplates. From any angle or opinion, the Redhawk is a big, rugged-looking handgun. It has to be big and rugged to house six .44s, which are loaded to 36,000 psi and capable of pushing a 300-grain bullet to more than 1,300 fps from a 5½-inch barrel.

Like all Redhawks, the 5½-inch-barreled test gun supplied by Ruger was equipped with a fully adjustable rear sight and a changeable, semi-dovetailed, black, ramped front sight with a red insert. Redhawks in 5½ and 7½ inches come with smooth, richly red-colored hardwood grips, and the 4½-inch versions are fitted with Hogue Monogrips. All have a flat, grooved rib on the top of the barrel, but on the 7½-inch Hunter Model the rib is machined to accept Ruger

Ruger Redhawk	
Type:	Revolver, double action
Capacity:	6 rds.
Caliber:	.44 Magnum
Barrel:	5.5 in.; 1:20-in. twist
Overall Length:	11 in.
Weight:	3 lbs., 6 oz.
Finish:	Satin stainless
Grips:	Hardwood
Sights:	Fully adjustable, notched (rear); dovetailed, blade with red insert (front)
Trigger:	4.5 lbs. (SA); 11 lbs. (DA)
MSRP:	$999
Manufacturer:	Sturm Ruger & Co. Inc. 603-863-3300, ruger.com





A 5½-inch, 49-ounce revolver that packs six rounds of .44 Magnum is indeed a handful. The Ruger Redhawk is, by any standard, a suitable bear defense or big-game revolver.



The Redhawk's stainless steel frame has a brushed finish and is devoid of sharp edges. This is important on a gun that rocks with authority when its trigger is pulled.



The Redhawk's hammer is small compared with the size of the gun, and this is appreciated during the intense recoil. It will not bite the web of your hand. The Ruger Redhawk's rear sight is fully adjustable for windage and elevation. A thumb latch on the left side of the Redhawk releases the cylinder for loading and unloading.

scope rings. The stainless steel frame and barrel have a brushed finish and were appreciatively devoid of sharp edges. Though it's not a carry gun, this is a nice touch.

Like other Ruger revolvers, the Redhawk incorporates the transfer-bar safety. For those unfamiliar with this concept, the transfer bar is a plate that extends up between the hammer and the firing pin when the revolver is fired. The hammer actually falls on the plate, which impacts the firing pin. The safety provided is that an impact to a cocked or uncocked hammer will not result in a strike to the firing pin unless the trigger is pulled to the rear; pressure on the trigger is what pushes the plate — the transfer bar — up between the hammer and the firing pin. Additionally, the Redhawk cylinder locks up at the front, rear and bottom to ensure more positive alignment.

The trigger pull on a Redhawk, both double action and single action, has always been considered good, probably in no small part due to the single trigger and hammer-spring mechanism. The new version is no exception. Though heavy at 6½ pounds, the single-action pull was incredibly crisp with only about 1/16 of an inch of overtravel. The double-action pull bottomed out a Timney trigger-pull gauge; it should come in at about 11 pounds.

PERFORMANCE

LOAD	WEIGHT (GRS.)	VELOCITY (FPS)	SD	ACCURACY (IN.)
Winchester JSP	240	1,337	26	1.49
Remington UMC JSP	180	1,571	34	1.50
Federal American Eagle JHP	240	1,394	17	1.51

NOTES: Average velocity and standard velocity deviation (SD) were obtained by firing 10 shots over a Shooting Chrony positioned 10 feet from the muzzle. Accuracy is the result of five five-shot groups fired 25 yards from a sandbag rest.

However, the trigger glided through its travel without any grittiness or bumps.

For those who've never fired a .44 Magnum handgun, there will be a revelation; it roars like a lion just shot in the butt with a load of double-ought and bucks like the broncos Keith used to ride in his youth. The .44 Magnum is a serious cartridge, but with the Redhawk you'll find the muzzle blast more disconcerting than the recoil. The Redhawk handles the snap of the 1,000 foot-pounds of muzzle energy very well.

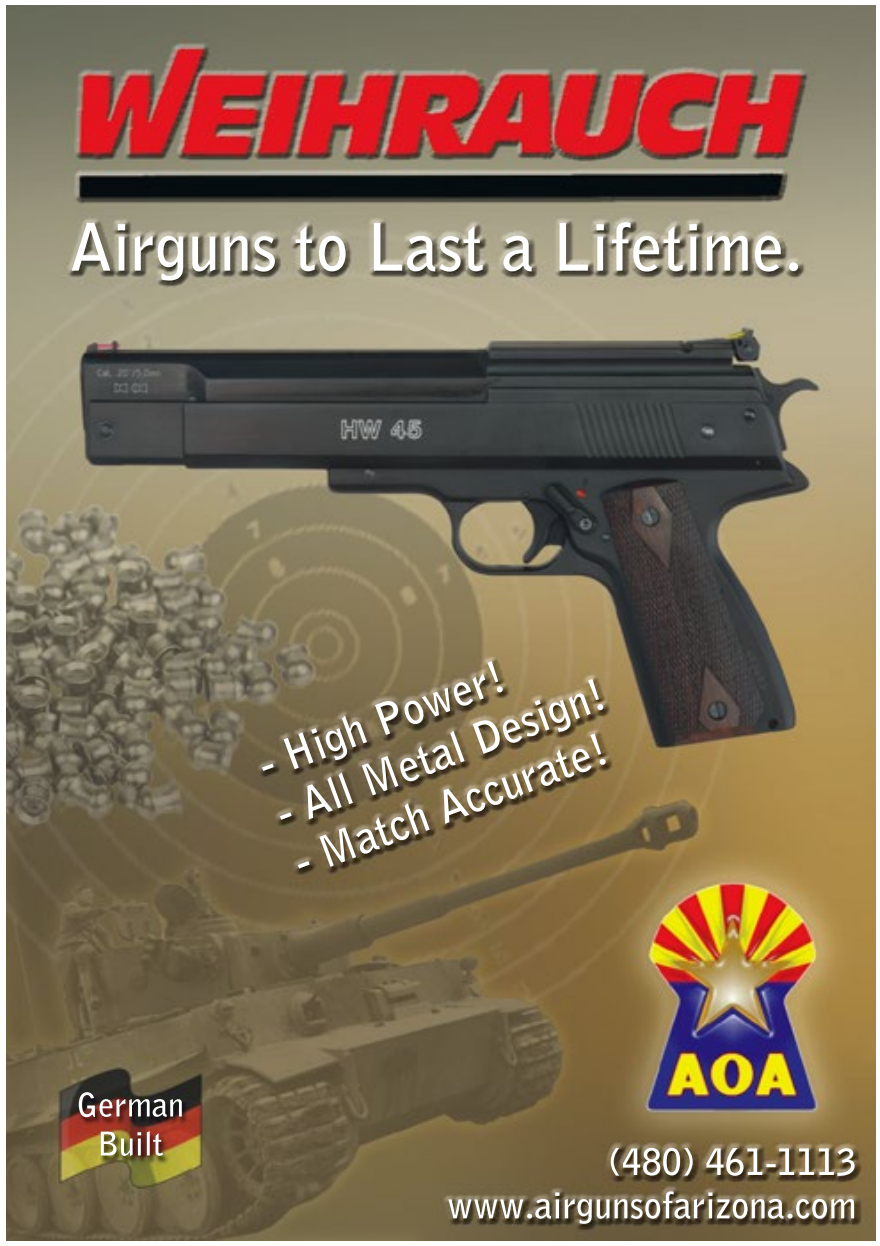
From a sandbag rest at 25 yards, you could consistently put five shots into 1½-inch clusters, and the revolver showed no real preference for any certain load. That said, the fireball and muzzle blast from the 180-grain Remington load left our staff with the impression that a hand grenade had just detonated. Compared to the Federal and Winchester loads, recoil was similar, but the ball of fire from the Remington load was like something a wizard would throw at a dragon. The concussion was equally supernatural.

After 300 rounds, G&A is confident that the new Redhawk is as sound as the old one. The real question should probably be what you could possibly want a handgun this powerful for. Sure, the allure of owning and shooting a revolver chambered for one of the most formidable handgun cartridges is there. If you're a serious handgun hunter, your choice of a Redhawk in .44 Mangum makes sense, too. The cartridge has power and reach; Keith claimed to have killed a mule deer at 600 yards with one.

To appraise the big-game hunting potential of the 5½-inch Redhawk, we placed a 5-inch square steel target at 30 yards for a kill zone. Our test staff planted our backsides against a tree and, with arms resting on our knees, took six shots at the plate. Any misses were more a reflection on shooting ability than the revolver's potential, but we were happy with an average of five out of six hits. Moving back to 50 yards, our hit percentage dropped to 50.

Where the real appeal of the stainless Redhawk and the .44 Magnum cartridge might be is as a backcountry bear defense sidearm. Though it might very well suffice, whacking an irritated brown bear with a .357 at 10 feet just does not seem like it would convey your message with the same conviction as if you had delivered it with a .44.

This bear defense concept needed testing, so a grizzly target was mounted on an MGM Attack Target. This target was designed to replicate the Tueller Drill, where a bad guy charges you from 21 feet, covering the distance in about 1½ seconds. If you are capable of putting three or







A solid grip and proper form are critical to controlling the .44 Magnum. From a comfort standpoint, the Redhawk handles recoil well, but the big revolver still bucks like the broncos Elmer Keith used to ride in his youth.

even two well-placed shots into the grizz target before it gets to you, you could reasonably depend on the 5½-inch Redhawk for that purpose.

We stepped in front of the MGM Attack Target, slipped the Redhawk out of the Galco DAO holster and held it at the low ready. (Only a fool would be within 21 feet of a brown bear with his handgun in a holster.) The go switch was pushed, and the bear target charged. We raised the robust revolver, sidestepped and hammered the trigger



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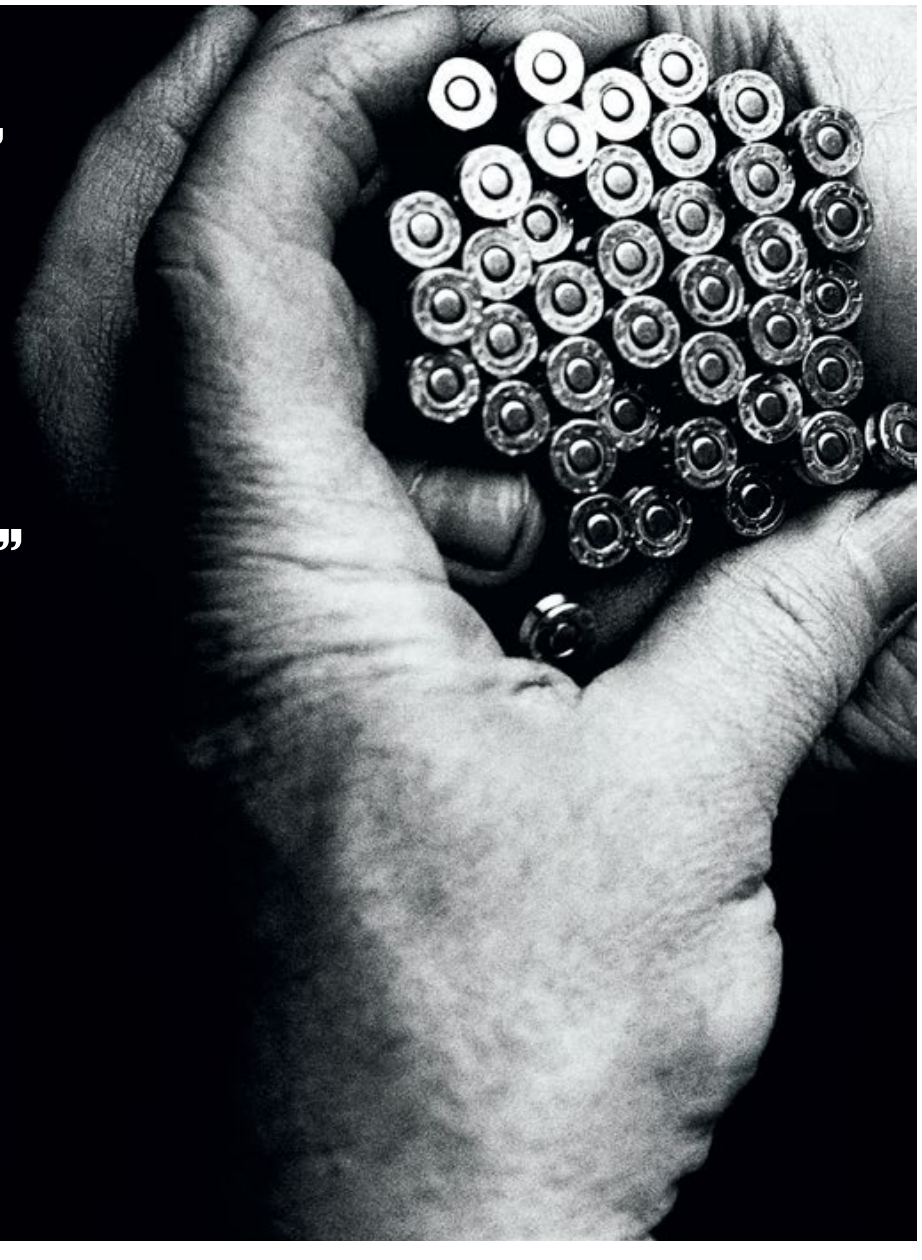
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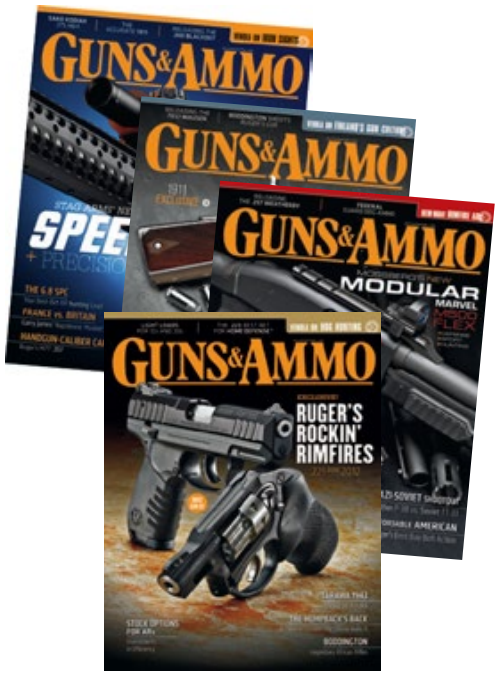
The front sight on the Ruger Redhawk is semi-dovetailed into the rib on top of the barrel. However, it can easily be changed by depressing a spring-loaded button on the front of the rib.

three times. Three holes you could cover with your hand appeared in the bear's head. We ran the drill several more times, and the results were similar. Admittedly, it was great fun, too.

We're not sure what Keith would've said about the new Redhawk, but he did speak favorably about the original in his March 1980 review for this magazine. Though we prefer sixguns with a bit less rock and roll, G&A is glad to see the Redhawk back in production. We bet a lot of Keith's disciples are, too. G&A

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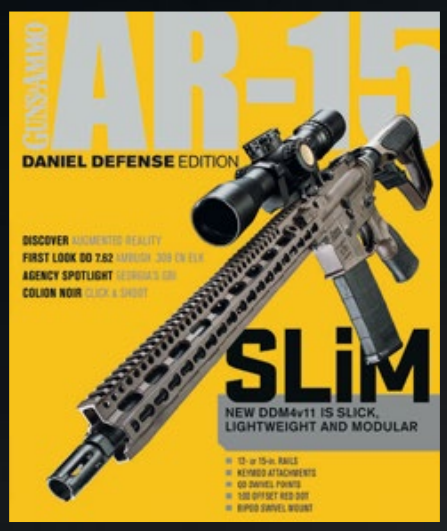


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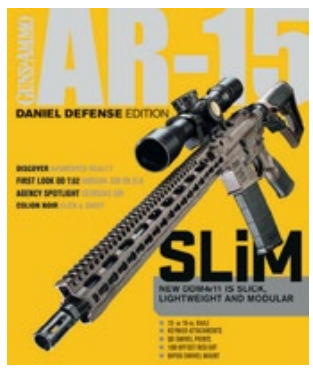
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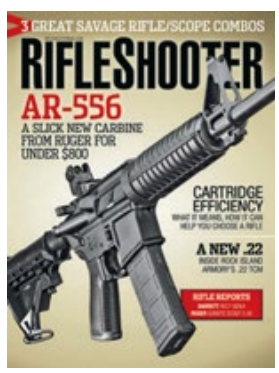
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2015 26 JANUARY
- SIG Sauer's cutting-edge P320 Conversion kit is a special package in terms of a striker-fired modular pistol platform built on a serialized chassis. We decide to try out each one of its multiple configurations at the range.
- The legendary name of World War II carbines, Inland Manufacturing, reintroduces the .30-caliber M1 Carbine first produced in the 1940s. It's almost an exact reproduction and is also available with a folding stock. We take a look.

2015 2 FEBRUARY
- We check out Ruger's ever-popular Gunsite Scout Rifle, chambered in a new caliber: .223. It is also being offered with a threaded barrel so you can screw on a suppressor.
- Next up is an overview of significant advancements coming from Leupold in 2015. Leupold introduces its Light Collimating Optic, or LCO, to the G&A team. Curious what this optic has to offer? Tune in for this exclusive report.
- "Option overload" may be a term you've come to use when trying to decide which suppressor is best for you. We jump right into the mix of what's available for every type of shooting.

2015 9 FEBRUARY
- The word "subsonic" is one of the more misunderstood terms in the shooting lexicon. G&A explains standard versus subsonic loads by highlighting two of Black Hills' 9mm factory loads.
- We address the often-overlooked topic of magazines and improvements made to them in the last few years, as well as offer reviews on a suppressed semiauto rifle with a .22-caliber, carbon fiber barrel.
- Rounding things out is a selection of new gear from Blackhawk that falls beneath the banner "Under the Radar." In today's world, you will find these items beneficial in preventing the loss of personal information.

2015 16 FEBRUARY
- Have you ever seen a flame lick the end of a suppressor due to high-volume shooting? Guns & Ammo has this phenomenon captured in high definition as Patrick Sweeney runs an AR until it glows, steams and smokes. Things get as hot as fire.
- We also highlight two new guns hitting the market: Smith & Wesson's new compact M&P .22 pistol and SIG Sauer's 556 in 7.62x39, a cartridge that is recently regaining considerable momentum among shooters.
- This week's show is finished off with a couple of compact personal defense guns as we look at the best way to carry and draw when you've got to protect yourself or your family. Tune in to find out about this pair of reliable pistols and gain some excellent advice on how to carry and draw in stressful situations.

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Item 93473 shown



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- No Gas Required

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TRIPLE BALL TRAILER HITCH



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Item 94141 shown

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- 70 dB Noise Level

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LOT NO. 69675/69728 CALIFORNIA ONLY

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SHE COULD DEFEAT ANY MAN

MRS. GERTRUDE E. BACKSTROM, a diminutive, 45-year-old housewife from Hoquiam, Washington, was captured in this photo receiving her tuned Colt Model 1911A1 from then-Staff Sergeant Paul Blazejowski, a legendary match armorer for the Marine Corps Pistol Team.

Backstrom set the women's national pistol record for the .45-caliber timed-fire match with 197/200 points in 1955. In addition to being the National Womens Indoor Pistol Champion from 1952 to 1959, she would remain the National Womens Pistol Champion until she stopped competiting in 1959. However, she wasn't content with holding 17 of 30 recognized National Womens Pistol records or being the multiple-High Woman champion in Conventional Pistol shooting. With a score of 2,592/3,000, she beat every man and woman for the overall High Civilian champion title in 1957. Matches were fired using .45-caliber 1911s and consisted of slow-fire, timed-fire and rapid-fire matches in addition to the National Match course. That year, she also took home the High Woman and 1st Civilian Master titles in the National Pistol Individual Championship with both the M1911 and a .38-caliber revolver, ranked first place overall in that year's .22-caliber slow-fire match and placed second overall in the .38-caliber National Match course.

She quietly passed away at the age of 57, just 10 years after competing in her last Camp Perry National Match. G&A

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